

# The Australian



Will H. Ogilvie

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## Will H. Ogilvie

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# THE AUSTRALIAN AND OTHER VERSES

BY

WILL H. OGILVIE

Author of "Fair Girls and Gray Horses" and "Hearts of Gold"

SYDNEY

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*Second Impression*

To  
THE MEN  
OF AUSTRALIA,  
who have proved for all time their  
unconquerable spirit and unswerving loyalty to  
the right, I dedicate these songs of  
the misty land they fought for  
and the sunny land  
that bred them



The verses from which this volume takes its title—*The Australian*—first appeared in *London Punch*. Other pieces have appeared in the *Spectator*, *Bulletin*, *Lone Hand*, *Pall Mall Magazine*, *Glasgow Herald*, *Westminster Gazette*, *British Australasian* and *Scotsman*. My thanks are due to the Proprietors for permission to reprint.

W. H. O.



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# The Australian



## The Australian

*"The bravest thing God ever made"—*

*A British Officer's opinion.*

The skies that arched his land were blue,  
His bush-born winds were warm and sweet,  
And yet from earliest hours he knew  
The tides of victory and defeat;  
From fierce floods thundering at his birth,  
From red droughts ravening while he played,  
He learned to fear no foes on earth—  
"The bravest thing God ever made!"

The bugles of the Motherland  
Rang ceaselessly across the sea,  
To call him and his lean brown band  
To shape Imperial destiny;  
He went, by youth's grave purpose willed,  
The goal unknown, the cost unweighed,  
The promise of his blood fulfilled—  
"The bravest thing God ever made!"

## THE AUSTRALIAN

We know—it is our deathless pride!—  
The splendour of his first fierce blow;  
How, reckless, glorious, undenied,  
He stormed those steel-lined cliffs we know!  
And none who saw him scale the height  
Behind his reeking bayonet-blade  
Would rob him of his title-right—  
“The bravest thing God ever made!”

Bravest, where half a world of men  
Are brave beyond all earth’s rewards,  
So stoutly none shall charge again  
Till the last breaking of the swords;  
Wounded or hale, won home from war,  
Or yonder by the Lone Pine laid,  
Give him his due for evermore—  
“The bravest thing God ever made!”

# Sunny Country



## Sunny Country

I dreamed of Sunny Country last night, a golden dream  
Of wattles down the gully and of gum trees by the stream,  
Of dancing haze and skies of blue no other land can show  
Save this—our Sunny Country, where the golden wattles grow.

I dreamed of Sunny Country ; a dream-ship took me down  
Far out of misty Scotland and the fogs of London town ;  
My foot was on the stirrup-bar ; down bridle-tracks of old  
I rode through Sunny Country in a blaze of blue and gold.

I woke again to labour ; all day the skies of blue  
Have roofed my house of fancy, and the sun has warmed me  
through,  
And if the days are dark and drear, the sweeter sleeptime seems  
When I sail to Sunny Country in my white-winged ship of  
dreams.

## The Bushmen

God, the day He fashioned them,  
Toiled to make them true,  
Hand and head and heart of them,  
Blood and bone and thew;  
Set them in the foremost rank  
Giants' work to do.

God, the day He fashioned them,  
Bred them to their sires,  
Supple as their bullock-whips,  
Tough as twisted wires,  
Filled the sturdy brains of them  
With His battle-fires.

Then when He had fashioned them,  
Tried them for His pride,  
Sent His droughts and chastened them,  
Sent His flames to chide,  
Sent His floods to harry them  
Wasting far and wide.

But the strength He set in them  
Braced His fighting brood,  
Bravely, face to face with Him,  
Shoulder-firm they stood—  
Then the God who fashioned them  
Knew His work was good!

So, when He has gathered them,  
God will not forget;  
High at the right hand of Him  
He shall have them set;  
Paying thus for pride of them  
Seven-fold His debt!

## The Overlander

I knew them on the road: red, roan, and white,  
Cock-horned and spear-horned, spotted, streaked and  
starred;

I knew their shapes moon-misted in the night  
As I rode round them keeping lonely guard.

I knew them all, the laggards and the leaders,  
The wild, the wandering, and the listless feeders.

And when I, weary, by the camp-fire slept,  
Booted and spurred, beneath Heaven's rafter beams,  
With slow and measured step their hundreds kept  
Moving and moving past me in my dreams.

I knew them all: streaked, spotted, roan and red;  
A thousand steers, range-run and Queensland bred.

I loved the wide gold glitter of the plains  
Spread out before us like a silent sea,  
The lazy lapping of the loose-held reins,  
The sense of motion and of mystery  
As the great beasts slid slowly through the grass,  
One passing one, then letting it re-pass.

I loved the misty sunrise, when the herd  
Drew from the camp, close-ranked, with clash of horn.  
When 'neath their hoofs the scented dust was stirred  
Still heavy with the dew-fall of the morn.  
I loved the jingle of the swaying load  
As the lean pack-horse lobbed into the road.

So, day by day, as men have done for years,  
Across the plain we brought the cattle down;  
And half my heart was with the moving steers  
And half lay yonder in a Border town;  
For, waiting there, my guerdon and my prize,  
Was home, and love, and little Laughing Eyes.

I was a western bushman born and bred,  
And so I loved the cattle, as men do  
Whose life is to the dusty sandhills wed,  
Whose world is bounded by a fence of blue;  
Yet one flower nearer to my heart I wore—  
The baby laughter of a child of four.

The lorries screamed above us as we rode;  
The emus ran before us, swift with fear.  
A great resistless tide of life we flowed,  
The largest mob out of the north that year;  
The muffled moving of the many feet  
Like sighing waves upon the silence beat.

## THE OVERLANDER

Two hundred leagues of stock-route burnt and brown  
In twelve-mile stages day by dazzling day  
Had worn the cleft hoofs of our cattle down,  
But had not stolen their wild hearts away;  
And in wide eyes, 'neath shaggy frontlets set,  
The fire of the free ranges smouldered yet.

A swagman stumbling down the dusty track,  
His blanket bundle on his shoulder borne,  
Would send the startled flankers rushing back  
To stop and stare at him, with tossing horn.  
A camel train across the sandhill stringing  
Would lift all heads and set the leaders ringing.

At night a blown bough tapping on the wire  
Would bring them scared and restless to their feet;  
A burnt log crashing inward on the fire  
Would lash their rebel blood to fever heat;  
And on the stormier nights when winds blew hard  
'Twas double watch—and sometimes three on guard.

As we drew near the Border, tank and creek  
For water failed us, and stage after stage  
The poor brutes plodded on for near a week  
In thirst that we were powerless to assuage.  
Blind, dropping froth, they stumbled in their going  
And filled the sandhills with their piteous lowing.

## THE OVERLANDER

13

On all the earth there is no sadder sound  
Than moan of cattle when their thirst is great;  
It quivers in the trees, and sky and ground  
With all its hopelessness reverberate:  
This heart-cry of the dumb brutes in the wild  
That sears you like the sobbing of a child.

We hung our stock whips on our saddle-dees;  
We crooned to the great beasts to soothe their pain;  
We sang to them to set them at their ease;  
But still their weird, low moaning filled the plain,  
As, blind, they passed us on their ceaseless quest,  
Pleading for water till the suns went west.

We reached the Border. On the night before,  
Forgetting for an hour those moaning cries,  
I found again the little flower I wore  
Close to my heart, and dreamed of Laughing Eyes.  
Ere the next night should come with star flag streaming  
My arms should hold her: so I thought of dreaming.

The cattle passed the netting fence at noon.  
Day blazed upon the glittering township roofs.  
The sun peered like a pale and misty moon  
Through the red dust wrack of the drumming hoofs.  
They smelt the water at the dams already;  
We rode in front to hold the leaders steady.

## THE OVERLANDER

Voices they heard not; whips they would not heed.

They swept upon us like a tide-wave's flow.

The dust rose up and wrapped us, man and steed;

And through the dust came thrilling—"Let them go!"—  
Swift towards the gleam that marked the river bed,  
Mad, blind, unbound, thundered the thousand head.

The red earth shook. The horns flashed by like flame.

The moaning rose and gathered to a roar.

All passed; even the laggard and the lame;

The plain lay empty as a desolate shore.

A known roof glimmered under dust-brown skies!

Home!—Home at last, and love—and Laughing Eyes!

Behind the mob the dust clouds thinned and cleared,

And as the sun broke through with sudden light

A tiny heap upon the sand appeared,

A heap of white: a—huddled—heap—of—white!

Ah! God!—I live again that anguished hour!

*The tattered, trampled thing!—My flower! my flower!*

• • • • •

All day I see them moving, moving by;

All night I hear them moaning in my dreams.

Always that little heap—ah! let it lie!—

Always the dust that whirls, the roof that gleams!  
Always the sunlight as the dust clouds part,  
And shadow, shadow, shadow on my heart!

The city reels about me. Carts and cars

Make thunder down the streetways east and west,  
But out amid the silence and the stars

I ride around my cattle as they rest.

The camp fire's banners on the dark extend;  
The horse bells jangle in the river bend.

The grey dawns wake them; out of sleep they start,

And draw amid the dim light down the plain;  
Their every hoof is heavy on my heart,

Their every horn stabs deep with an old pain;  
And yet I love my cattle—God knows why!—  
I sing to them, I sing as they go by.

I know them all so well; red, roan, and white,

Cock-horned and curly, spotted, streaked and starred;  
I know their shapes moon-marked upon the night

As I ride round them keeping lonely guard.

I love them all: streaked, spotted, roan and red;  
My thousand steers, range-run and Queensland bred.

## The Riding Camel

I was Junda's riding camel. I went in front of the train.  
I was hung with shells of the Orient, from saddle and cinch  
and rein.

I was sour as a snake to handle, and rough as a rock to ride,  
But I could keep up with the west wind, and my pace was  
Junda's pride.

I was Junda's riding camel. When first we left our land  
Camels were rare on the Queensland tracks as ropes made out  
of the sand;

But slowly we conquered a kingdom till down through the dust  
and heat

Not a road from the Gulf to the Border but carried the print  
of our feet.

And I was the riding camel. I carried him—Junda Khan—  
The dark-skinned Afghan devil made in the mould of a man!  
I gave no service to others, yellow, or white, or brown,  
But Junda Khan was my master; I knelt when he "Hooshed!"  
me down.

When the gloom on his forehead gathered, when he fingered  
the blade at his belt,  
The men who handled the nose-strings knelt low as the camels  
knelt;  
For each of them—beast and driver—from Koot to the camel-  
foal,  
Knew that the man who led them owned them body and soul.

Northward I carried my master. The creek by the road was  
dry;  
The sun like a burning waggon-wheel rolled down in the western  
sky;  
The dust was white on the saltbush, the ruts were deep in the  
road,  
And the camel behind me grunted at every lurch of his load.

A dust-whirl rose in the bushes and circled into the sky,  
The shells on my harness rattled as its burning breath went by.  
And out of the endless distance clear-cut on the world's edge lone  
Like a silver sail on the ocean the roof of a homestead shone.

The white man stood at my shoulder, sunburnt, lissome and  
straight,  
In the deep of his eyes was anger to match with the Afghan's  
hate.

## THE RIDING CAMEL

I know no word of the quarrel. The "Hoosh-ta!" came and I  
knelt;  
And Junda sprang from my saddle, and the knife leapt out of  
his belt.

There was a cry in the sunset, an echo that rang at the ford;  
Then silence fell on the roadway till a scared bull-camel roared.  
My master turned and mounted; I felt the sting of his goad,  
And we swept away through the saltbush; and the rest stood still  
on the road.

The night came up from the river, darksome and deep and drear.  
Swift were my feet on the sandhill, but swifter followed his fear.  
When the stars were dim in the daylight and the moon on the  
mulga low  
A hundred miles of desert lay between the blade and the blow.

We were far from the fetter of fences and far from the dwel-  
lings of men,  
Yet for less than an hour he rested, then mounted and rode  
again.

I was sore and weary and thirsty when out of the blaze of noon  
We camped in the shade of a wilga clump and drank at a long  
lagoon.

Ah! Never was life-blood taken of white, or yellow, or brown  
But the keen-eyed men in the helmets have ridden the taker  
down!

Never a trail on the sandhill of camel, or horse, or shoe  
Crossed by a hundred others but the trackers have tracked it  
through!

Sore of the saddle and weary, Junda, the killer, slept;  
But I, I watched from the bushes while the armed avenger crept.  
Sharp came the call in the English tongue, and my master sprang  
from sleep,  
Hand to the hilt of his Khyber knife, crouched for his one  
swift leap.

Brave are these outpost English, but simple as children be;  
The pistol-barrel that held his life hung loose at the trooper's  
knee.  
There was a flash in the sunlight, the gleam of a long blue  
blade,  
A cry in the noontide stillness, a corpse on the sandhill laid.

I was his riding camel; but deep in my heart there stirred  
Something of lust and anger I could not name in a word.  
When he came to me swift and sudden, the blood-red knife in  
his belt,  
I could not kneel at his bidding as I and my sires had knelt.

Wrath at his long-time goading, fear of his cruel hand,  
Made me a raging devil that heard no man's command.  
And when he struck at my nostrils, mad with his human fear,  
I clenched my teeth in his shoulder, and clung till the blood  
ran clear.

I knelt with my weight and crushed him. He died, and at  
Allah's Gate  
The soul of him sobs and trembles where the grim Black Camels  
wait.  
Could I do else, my brothers, I who remembered then  
The moan of the laden pack-beasts and the mutter of Junda's  
men?

## A Leaf from Macquarie

A gumleaf from Warren, all withered and brown,  
Fluttered out from a letter to-day,  
And my heart has gone back where Macquarie winds  
    down  
By dusty red stock-route and sleepy grey town  
    Between banks where the river-oaks sway.

The far-travelled sheep lie at rest in the bend,  
    And the camp fire gleams red to the sky,  
The shadows creep round us, and day's at an end  
And the gum trees lean down to us, friend unto friend,  
    As the night-winds go murmuring by.

Not a horse-bell of ours but the gum trees have heard  
    As their watch by our camp fire they keep;  
Not a tired overlander, stretched, booted and spurred.  
In a dream of mobs rushing has muttered and stirred  
    But the gums sang him back to his sleep.

Aye! and those of us holding lone watch in the night—  
    Have we ever looked upward in vain  
To the magic brown branches that trellis the blue,  
Where the stars of our comfort look hopefully through,  
    Giving strength for the battle again.

A leaf from Macquarie! My heart's on the road  
    With a mob yarded out of the years!  
No higher-prized gift could a hand have bestowed  
Than this withered brown leaf with its mystical load  
    Of old laughter, old labour, and tears!

## My Australian Spurs

Old and worn my Bushland spurs  
Hang above my desk to-day.  
Memory, on that broom of hers,  
Witchlike bears my heart away  
Over seas that restless roll,  
'Neath forgotten stars that shine,  
To a dim and distant goal  
In a land that once was mine.

There I wake where Dawn has trod,  
Bind again those friends of steel,  
As the happy morning god  
Binds the sunlight on his heel,  
Taking back on golden plains  
Youth set free of Time's reproofs,  
Laughter loosening the reins,  
Joy that speeds the lifting hoofs.

## MY AUSTRALIAN SPURS

Gathering from the morning mist  
    Come the comrades loved of old,  
Brown of cheek and red of wrist,  
    And with hearts of royal gold,  
Iron-thighed and lithe and lean,  
    Toilers of the rope and brand,  
Men who know what friendships mean  
    And the worth of hand on hand.

Through the drowsy Bush we ride  
    (Lonely, worn Australian spurs!)—  
Half the world can ne'er divide  
    These our exiled hearts from hers!  
From her gum-trees' chequered shade,  
    From her rivers brown and low,  
From the call our hearts obeyed  
    Long, and long, and long ago!

Better far that yonder wall  
    Keep my old Australian spurs,  
If it be the Bushland call  
    Now no more our troop bestirs;  
But if gay they gather yet  
    Where the scrub-line meets the blue,  
When your broom is Southward set,  
    Witch, take back my heart with you!

## The Outlaw

Our realm was the fenceless ranges. We fed in the bluegrass swamps.

The green of the branching wilga was the roof of our noon-day camps.

We drank at the pools in the lignum, where the mist and moonlight meet,

Stealing like wraiths through the darkness with the dew on our shoeless feet.

I was the chief and warden. I watched while the shy mares fed. I herded the bitless yearlings—those proud, wild sons I bred. When a dry twig snapped in the forest, when a snake slid out of the grass,

I called my mob together till I saw the danger pass.

For matchless speed and beauty and pride of blood and bone The bushmen of the Border had marked us as their own.

All day they planned their stockyards and set their blue-gum bars,

All night they wrought our capture as they dreamed beneath the stars.

## THE OUTLAW

They tracked us to our playgrounds. They hid to watch us feed.

They matched their weighted walers against our naked speed;  
And when we broke and beat them, out-wiled them, and out-ran,  
I was the proud grey stallion that thundered in the van!

For long our speed defied them. We met and beat their best:  
The Border's swiftest horses and the picked men of the West;  
But Drought rode down the ranges and drove us, worn and weak,  
From out the sheltering mulga to the flats beside the creek.

Then with their corn-fed horses they chased us, frail and afraid,  
And forced us foamed and fretting to the yards that they had made;

Within their ten-foot fences and behind their blue-gum bars  
They held us—kings of freedom whose fence had been the stars.

They broke my mares to harness. They saddled my splendid sons

To round the cattle on drafting-camps on drought-bound western runs.

These they bent to their bidding; but I was aware and awake;  
They broke my sons to service, but me they could not break!

I threw their famous riders one by one as they came:  
The lean, brown reckless bushmen that sought my heart to tame.

I would not bear their burden, I who had never borne  
More than the dust of the noonday, more than the wind of the  
morn!

And then he came—my master! Lissome and iron-thighed,  
Lord of the earth's wild horses, riding as Centaurs ride.  
Boldly I battled beneath him; I matched my strength with his  
own.

I had thrown a hundred riders. He was not born to be thrown

He scored my ribs with greenhide. He spurred my flanks till  
they bled.

He checked my mouth with the bar-bit till the foam came back  
to him red.

I fought like a maddened wild-cat at the ceaseless sting of his  
steel,

I turned like a tortured tiger-snake and bit at his rowelled heel.

I gave him no easy triumph. Stubborn, I would not yield  
Till my eyes were hot and clouded and my hide was wet and  
wealed;

But at last my sinews slackened, my proud, wild spirit was  
spent,

And I bent to the will of my rider as I never before had bent.

## THE OUTLAW

Then did he show no mercy, but for every stroke I had made  
Struck me again, and fiercely, with his splendid strength for  
blade.

He spurred me out to the ranges then, dripping with blood and  
foam;

And weary and blind and conquered, he flogged me bitterly  
home.

Day after day he rode me. I ceased from the useless fight;  
I could not face his courage and I could not match his might.  
I had marshalled in vain my cunning, I had pitted my strength  
and failed,

And under the eye of the master at each new dawn I quailed.

But the fire at my heart kept burning. At last, as he stooped  
for a girth,

I leapt with a scream of fury and struck my foe to the earth.  
I trod and trampled him under, I tore his breast with my teeth,  
My towering weight above him and his quivering flesh beneath!

Then I broke to the open ranges; there was none could stop me  
or stay,

No creek in flood could foil me, no fence could bar my way.

I tore his trappings from me on the boughs of the belar  
And, naked as I left them, I went back to wind and star!

The scrubs were gay as ever and the lignum swamps as green,  
I found the shady wilgas where our noonday camps had been.  
But the Bush was still and lonely; I had neither breed nor  
bride,

When I whinnied down the ranges it was echo that replied.

Then came my fear upon me; a fear that fills my breast;  
A racking, ruthless terror that robs me of my rest;  
A shadow-shape that meets me where the wilga-shadows stir.  
The phantom of a horseman that rides with whip and spur.

My flanks are cleansed of blood-marks, my bit-torn mouth is  
healed,

But again I meet my master and again he makes me yield.  
Beneath the moons of midnight and through the morning haze  
He flogs me, wet and trembling, down the old remembered ways.

I could not throw him, living, in my fierceness and my faith;  
And to-day I find no courage that will rid me of his wraith.  
With lean ribs lashed by terror, with flanks that fear makes  
red

I carry through the ranges the Unrelenting Dead.

I feed not in the daytime. At night I take no rest.  
The sweat is on my shoulder and the foam is on my breast.  
I bear no bit nor bridle, but 'neath the open sky  
The wraith of him that rode me shall ride me till I die!

## The Pack Horse

The way was glad with their careless laughter,  
The Bush was gay with our camp-bell's call;  
The blue of the sky was our nearest rafter,  
The edge of the world was our closest wall.  
I tugged, as I went, at the tall swamp-grasses;  
The hobbles clinked and the tin-ware rang.  
Youth's are the eyes with the rose-hued glasses;  
Youth's is the faith that never passes;  
Blithely the riders sang.

Sang of the girls they had left behind them;  
Sang of the gold that their toil would win;  
Of the arms of the Bush flung wide to wind them,  
Of the sky and the stars that would gather them in.  
Tossing their bits, the hacks went swinging;  
And proud I stepped 'neath the picks and pans,  
Glad of the help my strength was bringing,  
Glad, as I heard my masters singing,  
    Every word was a man's.

The way was long to the western ridges;  
Summer was swifter than horses' feet;  
Behind us, we knew, were our broken bridges  
    Where the pools had dried in the dust and heat.  
Sick for the sun like a blood-fed spider  
    Over the web of the world to pass,  
Slower we stepped with the pack and the rider,  
And every night our bells went wider,  
    Searching in vain for grass.

We came at last to the sand-swept spaces;  
A mountain of quartz stood rugged and white,  
The men were famished, with drawn, grey faces;  
Our ribs were lean and our flanks were light;

## THE PACK HORSE

But there—all pink at the day's beginning—  
Was the spot that the rose-hued glass had shown;  
There, at their feet for its worthless winning,  
Heart of sorrow and soul of sinning,  
Gold, they might take and own.

They left their picks to the wind and weather,  
Yet I carried more than my back could bear,  
And I was their hope, for my mates together  
Lay lean and dead on the drift out there.  
Bravely I staggered beneath my loading,  
But drought had stolen my strength away,  
I could not travel for all their goading;  
At night I knew with a grim foreboding  
Death would come with the day.

The dawn looked down on a pack-horse dying,  
And a load that lay in the grey-white dust,  
And a haggard horseman, "He cannot," crying,  
And another cursing, "He must. He must."  
One struck with a rope. The sky went reeling;  
A tiny cloud in the East turned red.  
When sense to my stricken brain came stealing,  
I knew that one on the sand was kneeling,  
And that one lay dead.

I did not die. When I saw him going,  
I rose to my feet and, faint and weak,  
Followed; and so, untold, unknowing,  
We came at last to the one full creek;  
And so through the windswept desert spaces  
Back to the pasture-lands of pine,  
Back to the world of girths and traces,  
With a secret hid from the searching faces—  
His secret and mine.

## The White Ibis

When the fierce Barwon from the Border brings  
His massed battalions to the drought's defeat,  
Above his pathway, with white folded wings,  
I dream in the noon's heat.

I hear the Southward gallopers go by,  
Bearing the message of the brown flood's threat;  
I hear the whistling teal above me fly  
With glistening wings and wet.

I see the ruins of a hundred farms  
With plunder of grey banks beneath me swept;  
I know the dawn's fear and the night's alarms,  
I know the vain watch kept.

Sometimes there passes with the drifting things,  
Lifting and falling, turned to the blank sky,  
A drowned face whiter than my snow white wings,  
Then—a lone mourner—I.

## THE WHITE IBIS

35

Who know the deep heart of the Barwon best,  
And all the hunger of his hate unfed,  
Pluck, in my pity, from my snowy breast  
One white plume for the dead.

## Cicadas

When the Bush is still as death,  
And the night wind whispers under her breath,  
When the white stars beckon without a word  
And not one leaf of the box is stirred—  
Sudden, as though at the baton-fall  
    Of a hidden leader, the oak-trees break  
Into sibilant music, one and all;  
    And every pine has a harp to wake,  
And every gidyea a tune to call.

Then the bridle-path that was dumb and drear  
Rings with an elfin music clear,  
And the shimmering starlight wraps us round  
With a cloak of passion, a robe of sound.  
We pierce the shadows with watchful eyes;  
    But, however the moon shine bold and bright,  
However the weird notes fall and rise,  
    There is never a sweet-throat singer in sight  
'Twixt the sombre earth and the silver skies.

'Tis a song of love and a song of pride,  
And it swells in a rolling splendid tide,  
Till the night with its rosy warmth is lit  
And the cold grey Bush is a-throb with it.  
Then suddenly swift, as it were a sword  
Had flashed from some jealous angel's hand,  
And severed the music's silken cord,  
Cloaked Silence stoops on the listening land,  
With the broken bowl of her peace restored.

## Sydney

The green Bush mantles your shoulder,  
The blue wave washes your feet;  
There be greater cities and older,  
But never a city so sweet.  
By gardens sloped to the water,  
By clean towers built for pride,  
You were born for an Empire's daughter,  
And bred for an ocean's bride!

By every sun-brownèd maiden  
That laughs on your low sea-beach,  
By your tanned Apollos laden  
With all that your long waves teach,  
By each clasp in your diamond splendour,  
By each kiss in your leafy cove,  
You were made for the passionate tender  
Embrace and avowal of love!

By the banks of your rippling river,  
And the camping-grounds in the trees,  
You were made for ever and ever  
For love and laughter and ease.  
For sunlit oars on the water,  
For soft hands trailed in the foam,  
For a moon on the heeling quarter,  
When the white sea-wings come home!

Not a ship that rocks in your fairway,  
Not a liner lashed to your quays,  
Not a war-gig chained to your stairway  
But has brought from the outmost seas  
Some heart that will soon grow tender  
To your charms of beach and grove,  
And go sadly forth from your splendour  
As a lover would leave his love!

## A Bush Night

I remember the tilt of the deep canvas chairs, and the men  
sitting idle,  
And out in the paddock a hoof going past and the click of a  
bridle;  
And everywhere else the weird silence that lay upon sandhill  
and clearing,  
Till the hum of a questing mosquito beat loud like a drum on  
our hearing.  
I remember the pale summer lightning that flashed on the purple  
horizon,  
Full-sweep like the sword-play of giants, the dark to bedeck  
and bedizen  
With gold for the path of the planets; and far by the creek  
I remember  
A red fire that leapt and lay down, and died out in disconsolate  
ember:  
The camp of some lonely wayfarer. The heat of the night  
hovered o'er us;  
Then loud from the marge of the distant lagoon came the  
clamouring chorus

Of bull-frogs that moaned to a waterless sky for the rain cloud denied them.

Shrivelled and shamed stood the sunflowers, and prayed to the shadows to hide them.

The stars like cut gems in the darkness above the dim pepper-tree twinkled,

And somewhere beyond the burnt sandhill a cowbell incessantly tinkled.

The heat laid a garment about us, no wind set the vine leaves a-quiver

That fenced the broad-boarded verandah, no breeze blown across from the river

Brought coolness or comfort or promise; the bull-frogs ceased suddenly singing;

Then sounded the creek of a cane chair, and one from among us up-springing

Woke the wide boards with a jangle of loose-buckled spur-rowels trailing,

And clanked to the water-bag hung from the roof by the vine-trellised railing,

Clinked the tin pannikin, dipped it, and holding it brimmingly lofted,

Murmured, "The Lord send us rain and fat horses!" then tipped up and quaffed it.

## The Australian Fleet

Long and long has she slumbered, till many a mouth denied  
There was life in the ancient spirit that folded our fathers'  
pride,  
Till many a lip grew scornful and curled at a nation's name  
That could borrow our island honour and trade upon England's  
fame.

Long was her pride in awaking, this Queen of the Southron  
Seas,

Slow has she been in making a flag to fling to the breeze;  
But at last, alert and stirring, she has heard what the sagas  
sing—

At last the wheels are whirring, the hammer and anvil ring.

Could the old bold blood run calmly, could the old quick pulse  
beat slow

While the long waves leap on the Leeuwin and winds on the  
Otway blow?

Hark to the ocean crooning the old, old song made new:  
"Come to me, Sea King's children—my warm wide breast for  
you!"

They have left their fires in the ranges, they have left their  
ploughs on the plain,  
They have left their colts in the stockyard, to come to their  
own again!  
To plough with their keels the furrows their fathers ploughed  
of yore,  
To fasten the sea's white horses to the yoke of the oak once  
more!

What fear for the nameless future? What doubt for the years  
unrolled?  
If the hands are new to the labour, is the blood not tried and  
old?  
Shall not the spirit of Nelson, of Grenville, and Howe and  
Drake  
Look down on these decks of venture and guard them for  
England's sake?

## Black Wings

Sextons of the Overland! Buriers of the dead,  
Where graves are lone and shallow and winding sheets  
are red!

Wardens of the waggon track, watchers by the creek,  
Loiterers in the lignum where the blacksoil traps the  
weak!

Feasters at the wayside, guests at the lagoon,  
Gloating over dead sheep rotting in the noon!  
Robbers on the red roads, highwaymen of Drought,  
Settlers of the issue that the dawn has left in doubt!

Was there ever team-horse from the chains let go,  
Was there ever lean steer lightened of the bow,  
But your hungry vanguard drifting from the sky  
Croaked beside his shoulder, glad to watch him die?

Ever tramped our cattle knee-deep in the grass,  
But you soared above them praying Death to pass?  
Ever went our sheep-mobs starvedly and slow,  
But you marked their weaklings stumbling to and fro?

Ever trod a bushman, tramp, or pioneer,  
O'er the plains of Famine, through the scrubs of Fear,  
But darker than his danger, closer than his dread,  
Shadows on his pathway, flapped ye overhead?

Call to mind the stock routes north and west and east!—  
Every heap of white bones fashioned you a feast!  
Call to mind the sandhills!—every wrinkled hide  
Made your perch at banquet the day a dumb beast died!

Surely, at God's muster, when our mobs again  
Trample through the star-grass up the purple plain,  
When from creek and sandhill crowd our western dead,  
He shall suffer only white wings overhead!

## The Team Bullock

The sunrays scorched like furnace fires;  
The sagging wool-bales dipped and swung;  
The sand poured off the four-inch tyres;  
The dust upon the float-rails clung.  
With lowered head and lolling tongue  
The lead-ox leaned against the bow,  
With yoke that creaked and chain that rung  
To every hoof that lifted slow.

Grim Drought had bound the Western land.  
The swamps were dry. The creek was low.  
The team that dragged across the sand  
Laid wasted necks against the bow;  
And as they staggered to and fro,  
Mere skeletons of bone and hide,  
The ribs that you might count a-row  
Made red the chain on either side.

Three flaring dawns had seen them yoked,  
Three scorching noons had watched them pass,  
With slaver on their lips—half-choked—  
Since they had drunk or tasted grass.  
The sun bit like a burning-glass.  
The near-side leader tripped and fell.  
“They’re done!” said Bunt. “The thing’s a farce;  
An’ drivin’ steers is worse than hell!”

He threw his team whip on the sand,  
And, turning to the blood-red West,  
He called on God with lifted hand  
To witness he had done his best;  
Then cursed the sandhills, base and crest,  
The stranded waggon and the wool  
And raving like a man possessed  
Thrice cursed himself for Fortune’s fool.

So, blasphemous, he sought the spot  
Where lay the leader; loosed his bow,  
And muttered “He’s the best I’ve got  
And, blast him, he’s the first to go!”  
He kicked its ribs with steel-shod toe,  
Then freed its mate and swung the rest,  
A staggering line with heads bent low,  
Along the highway of the West.

## THE TEAM BULLOCK

Their hope was dead; their strength was spent;  
The leader lost who held them straight.  
Dispirited and dull they went  
Beneath the pitiless yokes of Fate.  
No whip could mend their lifeless gait,  
No curse could steer them out or in;  
Death on the sandhill seemed to wait,  
To claim those victims gaunt and thin.

Old Warrior watched the dust go by,  
And heard the bellowing and the blows,  
The drone of wheels in distance die,  
The prescient clamour of the crows.  
Then with an effort he up-rose  
And, reeling like a beast in a dream,  
With drooping loins and dragging toes  
Went stumbling on behind the team.

The weary bullocks heard his tread  
And stopped beside the slackened chain,  
While Warrior gauntly stalked ahead  
And backed into his place again.  
Touched by a faith beyond his ken,  
Bunt murmured with the reverent fear  
That comes at times to brutish men,  
"My God! But that's the gamest steer!"

He let the threatening whip-thong fall  
Along the sand, a fangless snake;  
Though each ignored the starting-call,  
He could not flog—for Warrior's sake.  
With heart it seemed must burst or break  
He threw himself on suppliant knees—  
“My God, upon me pity take,  
For I have taken none on these!”

## Black Trackers

Swart bloodhounds of the fenceless West,  
Black gallopers that lead the Law,  
To whom your victims stand confessed  
By every lightest line they draw;  
The hawks that high above you sail  
Have eyes less keen to pierce the blue,  
The dingo on his hunting trail  
Runs slacker in the chase than you!

Your naked fathers, seeking food  
By signs upon the sand grew wise,  
And tracked their quarry till it stood,  
And bore it home, a hard-won prize.  
Now, clothed and horsed and paid in gold,  
Ye ride across the selfsame sands  
To track the outlaw to his hold  
And leave him in his foeman's hands!

With head upon your horse's mane,  
With eyes intent on every clue,  
By swamp and river, ridge and plain,  
Ye follow as the Fates pursue.  
Behind you, blood on spur and heel  
And foam on chain and rein and ring,  
With hands that tighten on their steel,  
Ride fast the troopers of the King!

The killer's threat is in your eyes,  
The falconer's and the hunter's pride;  
Athwart your brow a vengeance lies,  
Unborrowed from the band ye guide.  
The hate that shaped your fathers' spears.  
The wrath that armed some ancient sirc,  
The blood-lust of a thousand years  
Comes back to fan your hearts to fire!

Yet I have seen your passion sleep,  
Your hate and lust and anger die,  
When, stirred by human love as deep  
As ever moved a mother's sigh,  
Ye rode upon a gentler trail  
And followed, through the scrubland wild,  
In sorrow that ye scorned to veil,  
The footprints of a lost bush child!

## Coo-ee

Foam that feeds the Leeuwin,  
Rollers in the Bight,  
Cliff and sand of Coogee,  
South Head's lifting light!  
Coo-ee! Coo-oo-ee!  
Hear us call to-night,  
Coo-oo-oo-ee!

Ferry boats to Manly  
Funnel-deep in spray,  
Homes above the Harbour,  
Lights in Double Bay!  
Coo-ee! Coo-oo-ee!  
Friends of far away,  
Coo-oo-oo-ee!

Shady road to Springwood,  
Laughing Leura Fall,  
Blue Katoomba Valley,  
Grey Kanimbla wall!  
Coo-ee! Coo-oo-ee!  
Hear your lovers call,  
Coo-oo-oo-ee!

Stars above the gum trees,  
Camp fires in the bend,  
Hoofs upon the sandhills,  
And every hoof a friend!  
Coo-ee! Coo-oo-ee!  
All our love we send,  
Coo-oo-oo-ee!

Blue-eyed maiden waiting  
By your slip-rail bar,  
Brown-faced comrade riding  
West by sun and star!  
Coo-ee! Coo-oo-ee!  
Hear us from afar,  
Coo-oo-oo-ee!

Wide the seas between us,  
Long the leagues that lie;  
If no voice can voyage them  
And no voice reply,  
Coo-ee! Coo-oo-ee!  
Heart to heart can cry:  
Coo-oo-oo-ee!

## Comrades

Do the shearers still go riding up the Warrego to work,  
Where the Thurulgoona woolshed flashes silver in the sun?  
Are the bullock teams still bending through the coolibahs to  
Bourke?

Is there racing at Enngonia? Is Belalie still a run?  
Do the Diamantina cattle still come down by Barrungun?

Is the black soil just as sticky? Is the mulga just as dense?  
Are the boys still rounding cattle on the red Mulkitty plains?  
Are there still some brumbies running on the Maranoa fence?  
Still some horsemen always ready with more gallantry than  
brains

To race them through the thickest scrub with loose and flapping  
reins?

Does the flood-wrack still go rocking round the barren box-  
tree bends?

Do scorching winds still steal the grass that means dear life to  
you?

Do you still receive the message that a ravished Border sends

Of "Water done all down the road, and starved stock coming through"?

Does Drought still ride by Hungerford and Death by the Paroo?

Heigh-ho! But those were battle days, and hungry days, and hard;

With carcases and bones picked bare at every turning met,  
Lean steers upon the cattle-camps, lean horses in the yard,  
And weariness and bitterness, and toil and dust and sweat!  
Good luck to you, brave comrades, who are battling with them  
yet!

## The Bush

I hear you slighted often and maligned,  
Mis-read, misquoted, by the careless throng,  
And made the home of horror and despair.

\* \* \* \*

I know your days of sorrow; one by one  
Have I not gathered them into my breast  
And held them weeping? But I also know  
Your days of royal gladness, when the sun  
Leaps like a shining herald from the sky  
To call to love and laughter, and your nights  
Made mellow with the shrill cicada's hum  
And hung with whiter and with nearer stars  
Than any of God's nights; these things I know,  
And here beyond the dim dividing seas  
I stand and pledge your beauty; and I ask  
For you a future full of wider peace  
And homesteads harbouring a nation's strength,  
Oh! great warm-armed large-hearted Mother o' Men!

# Steeds of the Mist



## Steeds of the Mist

Steeds, O Steeds of the morning mist,  
Whose halters none but the wind may twist,  
Whose soft white flanks may feel no spur  
But the breeze that is setting the woods a-stir;  
O beautiful, silent steeds of grey,  
I will give you my heart to carry away!

As I stoop in the curve of your arching manes  
I shall feel the tug of your silver reins;  
I shall feel the foam on your rosy breasts  
As the dawn dips under your splendid crests,  
Though I know that your step is firm and fleet  
I shall hear no sound of your gliding feet!

You shall carry me over the mountain bar  
To the land where your breeding pastures are,  
Beyond where your squadrons blind the sun,  
To the fields where the glittering moon-mists run,  
To the forge where your hoofs are silver-shod  
'Neath the anvil sparks of the stars of God!

O beautiful, silent steeds of grey,  
You shall carry my wistful heart away;  
As your shadows are lost on the mountain wall  
So the shadow of grief from my heart shall fall,  
And the peace of the skies shall be mine to share  
When you cover my heart from its world of care!

## The Whaup

This is the lark of the hilltops,  
This is the mountain swallow,  
This is the carrier pigeon of the joy and grief of the moor;  
There is no wind of Heaven,  
No wind that he will not follow,  
No height that he dare not climb on his brown wings wide and sure.

All day, all day in the silence  
He cries to the moorland places,  
All day to the grey stone dykes and the peat hags and the moss,  
All day to the red grouse feeding,  
To the hares, and the shy blackfaces  
Dotting the darkened glen where the slow ghost shadows cross.

He keeps no tryst in the meadow;  
He leaves the plough to the plover,  
His song is not for the village or the trodden roads of the vale,  
But, wheeling above the bracken,  
He has dim old words to discover  
And wed to a witching music and weave in a haunting wail.

Climb from the oatfields upward  
And wait by the moorland wall,  
Just where the last plough faltered: and there where the first  
heath flames  
You shall hear him, priest of the purple,  
Out of the past recall  
Songs of the hills of silence and their dim forgotten names!

## The Ingleside

When the shadows downward glide  
Fancy rules the ingleside,  
And within the glowing fire  
Lie the dream fields of Desire.

Brighter than the lighted lamps  
Gleam the stars on far-off camps,  
Warmer than the pine-log glow  
Wait the lips of long ago.

There is not a lover fair  
But her face is pictured there,  
There is not a comrade true  
But goes redly riding through.

There is ne'er a dream of fame  
But takes shape in yonder flame,  
There is ne'er a song of love  
But is sung in yon red grove.

## THE INGLESIDE

Soft and grey a cinder falls:  
Camp and grove and castle walls  
Fade away in dust and flaine  
With our dreams of love and fame;

Yet, when shadows downward glide  
Fancy rules the ingleside,  
And we find amid the fire  
Dream flowers of the old Desire.

## The Horseman

My song is of the Horseman—who woke the world's unrest,  
To slake a King's ambition or serve a maid's behest;  
Who bore aloft the love-gage and reaped the rich reward;  
Who swayed the purple banner and swung the golden sword!

My song is of the Horseman! steel wrist and iron thigh,  
In whatsoever saddle, beneath whatever sky!  
Who breaks the road for Empire; who leads the hope forlorn;  
Who rides with whip and knee-pad; who rides with rope and  
horn!

My song is of the Horseman who backs the outpost law,  
Who holds with helm and carbine the frontier thieves in awe!  
My song is of the trooper who stands across the street,  
In hours of our forgetfulness, to stay the wild mob's feet!

My song is of the Horsemen who rides, unblanched, the vale;  
Who dares the deepest river and risks the stoutest rail!  
Who, 'neath the roaring race-stand, rides down to fence or fall;  
Who bends above the boar-spear; who drives the dancing ball!

## THE HORSEMAN

My song is of all Horsemen! The centaurs of all time,  
Who stole for us the freedom of colts of every clime!  
Who wore the spurs of mastery, who held the reins of pride,  
Who left the world a heritage of sons to rule and ride!

Up! Swear by bit and saddlecloth, by crupper, cinch and horn,  
The spurs our grandsires buckled by our sons' sons shall be  
worn!

Let oil, nor steam, nor wings of dream deprive us of our own—  
The wide world for a kingdom and the saddle for a throne!

## The Signpost

On my green grass plot I stand aloof  
Where the four white roads have met,  
And I hear the tap of the coacher's hoof  
And the hum of the landaulette.  
I point the road with a stretching arm,  
And the tale of the miles I tell  
To duke and squire and man of the farm  
And tattered tramp as well.

I'll show you the way to Lythamstoke,  
I'll show you the way to Sheen,  
The road that takes you to Burton's Oak  
And the road to Tyndal Green;  
And if you are looking for Foldingfleet  
Or Lipcomb or Lilfordlea,  
You have only to stand where the four roads meet  
And read of the way from me.

## THE SIGNPOST

In summer the green oak twines a crown  
To hang on my half-hid brow;  
In winter days when the leaves are down  
I am tapped by a windy bough.  
And if there are hours when the glad wheels drone  
And the racing road-cars glance,  
There are long, long nights when I dream alone  
While the mist and the moonbeams dance.

Beneath my arms have the lovers met  
In the dusk of the summer green;  
I remember a lad from Hummerset  
And a maid who came from Sheen.  
The hours went by and they took no heed  
Till the glow-worms lit the loam,  
And the dark came down and they could not read  
The miles they were each from home.

I am friend of the gipsies, maid and man,  
And the horse with the broken knees,  
And the lurcher dog, and the caravan,  
And the camp fire under the trees;  
The children wild as a woodland fawn,  
The girl with the loose black hair—  
I have sped them all at the grey of dawn  
Down the road to Lipcomb Fair.

But dearest the day when the foxhounds meet  
On my grass plot green and wide,  
When the pack comes up from Foldingfleet  
And the field from every side,  
When I hear the far-off hounds in flight  
And the distant horn all day,  
Till the parting horsemen call "Good-night!"  
As I send them each his way.

The roads are white, and the roads are brown,  
And the roses bloom and die;  
The oak-buds break and the leaves come down,  
But apart and aloof am I.  
The wheels may come and the wheels may go  
With the moods of the changing year,  
But white with the dust or white with snow  
I stand at the cross roads here.

I'll show you the way to Lythamstoke,  
I'll show you the way to Sheen,  
The road that takes you to Burton's Oak  
And the road to Tyndal Green;  
And if you are looking for Foldingfleet  
Or Lipcomb or Lilfordlea,  
You have only to stand where the four roads meet  
And ask of the way from me!

## A Song of the Poets

Bridges, Abercrombie, Davies,  
Yeats, and Noyes—ye favoured few!  
Music of the merle and mavis  
Echoing in the song of you!  
Watson, wrapped in purple splendour;  
Newbolt, nursing England's pride;  
Kipling, proud, majestic, tender;  
Masefield, from the worldways wide!  
Poets, while in days of weeping  
Lost Romance is mourned as dead;  
Yours the gold torch, yours the keeping  
Of the old fires fanned and fed!

When the wheels of commerce, whirring,  
Still the harp and drown the lyre,  
And the world's warm pulse is stirring  
To the throb of new desire;  
While the feet of fashion trample  
On the heart of him who sings,  
Time shall trust your brave example  
As ye sweep your golden strings!

Here and there some soul shall listen  
To your message faint but clear;  
Cheeks shall glow and eyes shall glisten,  
Doubting hearts take hope for fear!

Sing, ye seers, in pride and splendour!  
Sing, ye bards, of love and life!  
Tune your lyres to music tender,  
Blow your trumpet-calls to strife!  
Bare the truth, the hope, the wonder,  
Point the wild-flower in the grass,  
Light the glory, loose the thunder,  
Pluck the robes of those that pass!  
Say the wan world still holds beauty,  
Say Romance is not yet dead!  
Yours the torch is; yours the duty  
That the fires be fanned and fed!

## The Gipsy

"Now cross my hand with silver" said the gipsy crone to me,  
"And I will tell your life that's past and all your life to be!"  
I said, "The old I know too well, and fret not for the new;  
But there are many magic things I'd liefer learn from you!"

O tell me what the stars have told your quiet camps at night!  
What letters on the dark unrolled your fires' red fingers write!  
And tell me why the willows weep, and what the larches croon  
When their boughs are crossed with silver by the bonny harvest  
moon!

And tell me where the white roads lead that lure you on and on,  
And why the day grows dark indeed when once your wheels  
are gone!

And tell me why I miss you so, and why my wild heart grieves  
For you that come like buds in spring and go like autumn  
leaves!

O tell me what your horses drink with moon-dew from the  
grass!

O tell me when your low fires blink how close the fairies pass!

And tell me—this I most would know—what lore as babes  
you learn  
That gives you life-long freedom of the fir-wood and the fern!

When all the night unstirred and still, waits for his lone  
'Tu-whoo!'

Ah! tell me what the secret is the brown owl trusts to you!  
And, when the faint red fills the East, and gold rides up the day,  
What word is in the wind of dawn that sings your wheels away!

I'll cross your hand with silver if you'll tell me all I'd know  
Of what the roads have told you, and the birds, and winds that  
blow!

Yes, tanned and wrinkled Romany, my sage and seer confessed,  
I'll cross your hand with silver if you'll give me of your best!"

## The Flying Scotsman

'Tis ten o'clock at King's Cross. A green flag flicks the air;  
The couplings tighten link by link to take their equal share.  
A London engine whistles shrill, but he—he has no need;  
The distant signal drops an arm and calls him to his speed.

He slides across the jarring points on rails all wet with rain,  
And flings his grey locks to the wind and sniffs the north  
again.

He knows the road to Scotland, where far those white rails  
shine,  
And swift on wheels of thunder he takes the open line.

A slow train hangs beside him, drops back, and dies away;  
The little trains of London, what paltry lives have they!  
What know they of the glory of flinging back at speed  
Each mile of the green counties between the Thames and Tweed!

The grey suburban stations hold out their lifted names,  
A painted roofbeam flashes, a golden flower-bed flames;  
We have no time to heed them, to pity or admire;  
Between the sleepy platforms our wheels go by like fire.

By field and fold and coppice he lifts his gathering power  
By forty, fifty, fifty-five to sixty miles an hour!  
The drowsy cattle moving slow, knee-deep in English grass,  
Lift lazy heads in wonder as they watch his splendour pass.

A moment's pause at Grantham, as a bird might pause a-wing,  
Then forward to the fields again, a throbbing, living thing.  
O'er Midland fen and meadow, o'er Yorkshire down and dale,  
Till through the mist the minster towers rise splendid from  
the vale.

Once more the brakes are lifted, and on by Durham's spires  
He answers, as a horse the spur, his banked and burdened fires,  
Till through the gritty coal dust the high-set house roofs shine  
And swift and dark beneath us rolls down the ravished Tyne.

Clean fields again; bent toilers that poise their hoes and wait  
To watch the Flying Scotsman picking up his sixty gait.  
Then Cheviot shields the Lowlands with his warden majesty,  
And over Holy Island comes a breath of open sea.

Where here a castle glimmers, or there a coastal town,  
The whistle warns a crossing, or screams a signal down,  
Till sea-gulls by the Border Bridge stoop to our slowing speed  
And dip a silver wing to us to wave us home to Tweed!

## Last Night

Last night I heard as in a dream,  
Before the Dawn's first rosy beam,  
A seagull cry  
As he passed by.

There was no other bird awake;  
All were yet silent in the brake,  
Beneath the eaves,  
And in the leaves.

What brought this lonely wanderer by,  
Before a bird was in the sky,  
While, breathing deep,  
The world did sleep?

Through the dim veil of Night saw he  
The glimmer of white foam at sea,  
Or hear the roar  
Of the waves' war?

Or, flying to some point inland,  
Sought he the ploughman's curt command;  
The mouldboard's gleam;  
The trampling team?

Half dreaming, half awake, I heard  
The low call of the ocean bird;  
And knew that Day  
Was on the way.

And knew that God kept still in mind  
Seedtime and harvest, horse, and hind,  
And His great Deep  
That knows not sleep.

## The Carpet of the Wind

In the deep of the woodland places  
    The wind a carpet weaves,  
And into the pattern laces  
    The gold and red of the leaves.

There has never a cloth so splendid  
    By mortal brain been planned;  
The colours the wind has blended  
    Were fashioned in Fairyland.

What forms shall its splendour carry?  
    What feet shall its fairness tread?  
What love and what laughter tarry  
    In the loop of its gold and red?

And the voice of the high wind answers:  
    “I have woven the woodland o'er,  
That the feet of a thousand dancers  
    May dance on a golden floor;

"That, as far as my carpet covers,  
The glades may be softly trod  
By the feet of the little lovers  
That walk in the woods of God."

## Celandine

You blossom in no garden fair  
To glad the eyes of knight and dame,  
Yet humbly with your beauty rare  
You set the roadside banks afame.

The ploughboy turning with his team  
Upon the headland high above,  
Attracted by your modest gleam,  
Shall pick you for his lady-love.

The vagrant child that tramps the road  
On shoeless feet, begrimed with dirt,  
Shall gather you, a golden load,  
And lay you in her tattered skirt.

Thus do ye serve the humble need,  
Dear blossoms of the bank and glen,  
That scatter gold upon the mead  
And joy within the hearts of men!

## Laughter

Lend us Laughter, O gods, for our life is but vain;  
We are bruised by its rods, we are galled by its chain.  
What doth patience avail, or the strength to endure  
In the fight where we fail? Only Laughter is sure!

Faith is comrade no more. Sorrow sees us and nods.  
From your generous store give us Laughter, O gods;  
That with sword of it girt, and with helm of it crowned,  
We may battle unhurt, we may wander unbound!

Send us Laughter, great lords, for our woes are too deep  
To be served by the swords save of Laughter or Sleep!  
Lend us Laughter, O gods, and the world is our own,  
From the cloud to the clods, from the cot to the throne!

It shall soften the sting of the whips that are whirled,  
And a balm it shall bring for the wounds of the world.  
It shall lighten the rods, it shall cover the sore;  
Send us Laughter, O gods, for our armour of war!

## Again

Ain't it good to see again  
Leaf an' bud an' bee again—

Friends a fellow knows!

Ain't it good to feel again  
Hook an' rod an' reel again

Where the ripple flows!

Ain't it grand to hear again  
Larks a-singing clear again,  
To know that Summer's near again  
An' pinnin' on her rose!

Ain't it good to find again  
Winter's left behind again,

Summer's ridin' in!

Ain't it good to pass again  
Blue things in the grass again,

Gold things on the whin!

Ain't it sweet to smell again  
South winds off the fell again,  
Sailin' in to tell again

Tales of where they've bin!

Ain't it rare to rove again  
Through the light an' love again,  
    The colour an' the call!  
Ain't it good to take again  
Life for life's own sake again,  
    Lettin' trouble fall!  
Ain't it grand to know again  
Seasons come an' go again,  
Springtides ebb an' flow again,  
    An' God is over all!

## By Candle-Light

I went with my love by candle-light through the deep of the  
poplar grove;  
The moon looked down on the silver leaves and I looked down  
on my love.  
It is here where the shadows linger; it is here where the great  
moths are  
And a moth will come to a candle-light that is tired of chasing  
a star.

We scarce could follow by candle-light the turf path wet with  
dew;  
"Can you see where you're going, dear heart?" I asked. "No,  
dearie," she said; "can you?"  
But the candle shone like a guiding star held high at her golden  
head;  
"Your feet are so light on the grass, dear love, that you might  
be a moth!" I said.

Her laugh came back through the poplar leaves. A dim wing  
fluttered the flame.

I swept the dark with a gauzy net and muttered a new moth's  
name.

Then both of us knelt on the dew-wet grass and bent o'er a  
captured prize,

And I saw by the flickering candle-light the love-light wake in  
her eyes.

The kiss that I took was by candle-light in a shadow-and-silver  
shine;

The night wind lifted the poplar leaves as I lifted her face to  
mine.

The net fell down with an open fold and the fluttering moth went  
free,

But the heart that I caught by candle-light went home through  
the dark with me.

## The Garden of Night

The Night is a far spreading garden, and all through the hours  
Glisten and glitter and sparkle her wonderful flowers.  
First the great moon-rose full blooming, the great bed of stars  
Touching with restful gold petals the woodland's dark bars;  
Then arc-lights like asters that blossom in street and in square,  
And lamps like primroses beyond them in planted parterre;  
Great tulips of crimson that rise from the factory towers;  
White lilies that droop from deep windows; all flowers, the  
Night's flowers!

Blooms on the highway that twinkle and fade like the stars,  
Golden and red on the vans and the carts and the cars;  
Clusters of bloom in the village, lone homesteads a-light  
Decking the lawns of the darkness, the plots of the night,  
Then the bright blossoms of platform and signal that shine  
By the iron-paved path of the garden—the lights of the Line:  
The gold flowers of comfort and caution; the buds of dull red,  
Sombre with warning; the green leaves that say "Right ahead!"

Then the flowers in the harbour that low to the tide of it lean;  
The lights on the port and the starboard, the red and the green,  
Mixing and mingling with mast lights that move in the air,  
And deck lights and wharf lights and lights upon pierhead and  
stair;

An edging of gold where a liner steals by like a thief;  
The giant grey gleam of a searchlight that swings like a leaf;  
And far out to seaward faint petals that flutter and fall  
Against the white flower of the Lighthouse that gathers them all.

And flower-lights all golden with welcome, the lights of the inn;  
And poisonous hell-flowers—the doorways that beckon to sin;  
Soft vesper flowers of the churches with dark stems above;  
Gold flowers of court and of cottage made one flower by love;  
Beacons of windows on hillside and cliff to recall  
Some wanderer lost for a season—Night's flowers, one and all!  
In the street, in the lane, on the Line, on the ships and the towers,  
In the windows of cottage and palace—all flowers, the Night's  
flowers!

## The Mushroom Gatherers

Ere Fashion has waked to adorning,  
Ere Labour goes forth to her toil,  
We are free of the Autumn morning  
To gather our cream-white spoil;  
And from out of her curtain shadow  
The Dawn steps, rosy and red,  
To dance through the dew-wet meadow  
Where the tents of the elves are spread!

Oh! the search and the sudden wonder,  
The cry and the eager run,  
The circle of snow-white plunder  
Where yesterday grew not one!  
Oh! the hush of the morning holy  
On meadow and marsh and hill,  
And the basket that fills so slowly,  
And the basket that will not fill!

If you walk in the wet grass wary,  
If you move with a stealthy tread,  
You may chance on a laggard fairy  
That has lain too long a-bed;  
But a fold of your grey gown shaken,  
A tap of your tiny shoe.  
And the white tent stands forsaken  
To roof a regret for you!

Yet, however our fortune varies,  
However our quest may prove,  
We have found the gold-heart fairies  
That sleep in the tents of Love;  
We have trodden the fields of pleasure,  
We have drunk of the dawn-wine sweet,  
And have gathered enough of treasure  
If only our fingers meet!

## The Border Harp

Lilting ballads there are that cling  
Like busy bees on the purple ling;  
Every hill has a harper old  
Breaking a song from a harp of gold.  
What shall the singer of new songs sing?

Every hoof on the hillside set,  
All the pikes that have crossed and met  
Back in the reckless raiding time,  
The bards have taken and twined in rhyme  
And—they ring on the moorland yet.

Every maid that was fair or frail  
From Lammermuir to Liddesdale,  
Every man that was bold to ride  
On the Eastern march or the Solway side,  
Lives on for the lyre in silk and mail.

Never a peel-tower, grey o' the wall,  
But has wakened again at the thymer's call,  
    Till the crumbling stairways ring and reel  
    To the clank of the rider's armoured heel  
As he climbs to the bower and hall.

Never an abbey, roofless and bare,  
But a singer has sung it in music rare,  
    Calling the monks from their cloister cells,  
    Bidding the long-dumb vesper bells  
Tremble again on the evening air.

Ballad and story rise and ring,  
Glamour is out on enchanted wing;  
    Here where a thousand harpers old  
    Tighten the strings of their harps of gold  
What shall the singer of new songs sing?

## A Little Bit of Garden

We need no crown or sceptre,  
For, now that it is Spring,  
Just a little bit of garden—  
And every man's a king!

A little breadth of border,  
A little patch of grass,  
Above it all the April sky  
Where soft the south winds pass.

A spade and rake for comrades,  
The smell of rain-wet mould—  
And every time we turn a clod  
We turn a mint of gold!

A little bit of garden,  
With daffodils a-swing,  
And tulip-flowers whose crimson flags  
Are only flown for Spring.

Shy blossoming primroses,  
Forget-me-nots of blue,  
And here a blade and there a blade  
Of green things peeping through.

Who seeks for crown or sceptre  
When every man's a king  
Whose patch of cottage garden  
Has felt the feet of Spring?

## A Farewell

Flowers in my fading garden,  
I have come to bid you good-bye  
Before you have gone through the windy gates  
To the land where the dead leaves lie!

Roses, soft children of summer,  
I would not ask you to stay,  
For the mist is low on the valley  
And the last late swallow's away!

Hollyhocks, tall and kingly;  
Asters, purple and sweet;  
Harpalium, touching my shoulder;  
Lobelia, low at my feet.

You have jewelled my path with beauty,  
You have brought me a smile to keep;  
Go, and the sun go with you  
To gladden your dreamless sleep!

Marigolds, marred in blooming;  
Lupins that languid lie;  
Dahlias drooping beneath the frost;  
Good-bye, good-bye, and good-bye!

Not a wind shall blow in December  
Above the green earth's grave  
But shall bid my heart remember  
The gifts that my garden gave!

## There's a Clean Wind Blowing

There's a clean wind blowing  
Over hill-flower and peat,  
Where the bell-heather's growing,  
And the brown burn flowing,  
And the ghost-shadows going  
Down the glen on stealthy feet.  
There's a clean wind blowing,  
And the breath of it is sweet.

There's a clean wind blowing,  
And the world holds but three:  
The purple peak against the sky,  
The master wind, and me.  
The moor birds are tossing  
Like ships upon the sea;  
There's a clean wind blowing  
Free.

There's a clean wind blowing,  
Untainted of the town,  
A fair-hitting foeman  
With his glove flung down.  
Will ye take his lordly challenge  
And the gauntlet that he throws,  
And come forth among the heather  
Where the clean wind blows!

## Sheep Country

Flame of the heather dying,  
Fires of the bracken lit,  
Winds of October sighing  
Over the gold of it.

Clouds on the hill-top trailing,  
Shadows caught in the glen;  
Whaups to the moorland wailing  
Sorrows unguessed of men.

Grey moor gathered beside us,  
Blue moor meeting the sky;  
High peaks set to guide us,  
Low hills letting us by.

Rough-topped grey walls creeping  
Out to the grey sky-line;  
Woods, and within them sleeping  
Tasselled and storm-tossed pine.

Tracks in the heath around us  
Only the sheep have trod;  
Nothing to bind or bound us  
Save the wide skies of God!

## The Plough

From Egypt behind my oxen with their stately step and slow  
Northward and East and West I went to the desert sand and  
the snow;  
Down through the centuries one by one, turning the clod to  
the shower,  
Till there's never a land beneath the sun but has blossomed  
behind my power.

I slid through the sodden ricefields with my grunting hump-  
backed steers,  
I turned the turf of the Tiber plain in Rome's Imperial years;  
I was left in the half-drawn furrow when Cincinnatus came  
Giving his farm for the Forum's stir to save his nation's name.

Over the seas to the North I went; white cliffs and a seaboard  
blue;  
And my path was glad in the English grass as my stout red  
Devons drew;

My path was glad in the English grass, for behind me rippled  
and curled

The corn that was life to the sailor men that sailed the ships  
of the world.

And later I went to the North again, and day by day drew down  
A little more of the purple hills to join to my kingdom brown;  
And the whaups wheeled out to the moorland, but the grey gulls  
stayed with me

Where the Clydesdales drummed a marching song with their  
feathered feet on the lea.

Then the new lands called me Westward; I found on the  
prairies wide

A toil to my stoutest daring and a foe to test my pride;  
But I stooped my strength to the stiff black loam, and I found  
my labour sweet

As I loosened the soil that was trampled firm by a million  
buffaloes' feet.

Then further away to the Northward; outward and outward  
still

(But idle I crossed the Rockies, for there no plough may till!)  
Till I won to the plains unending, and there on the edge of the  
snow

I ribbed them the fenceless wheatfields, and taught them to reap  
and sow.

The sun of the Southland called me; I turned her the rich  
brown lines  
Where her Parramatta peach-trees grow and her green Mildura  
vines;  
I drove her cattle before me, her dust, and her dying sheep,  
I painted her rich plains golden and taught her to sow and reap  
  
From Egypt behind my oxen with stately step and slow  
I have carried your weightiest burden, ye toilers that reap and  
sow!  
I am the Ruler, the King, and I hold the world in fee;  
Sword upon sword may ring, but the triumph shall rest with me!

## The Comfort of the Hills

Heart! If you've a sorrow,  
    Take it to the hills!  
Lay it where the sunshine  
    Cups of colour spills!  
Hide it in the shadow  
    Of the folding fern;  
Bathe it in the coolness  
    Of the brown hill burn;  
Give it to the west wind,  
    Blowing where it wills;  
Heart! If you've a sorrow,  
    Take it to the hills!

Heart! If you've a sorrow,  
    Take it to the hills,  
Where Pity crowns the silence  
    And Love the loneliness fills!  
Bury it in bracken,  
    Waving green and high,

O'er it let the heather's  
Peaceful purple lie!  
Trust it to the healing  
Heaven itself distils;  
Heart! If you've a sorrow,  
Take it to the hills!

## The Roman Wall

The grey moor dips to the mist-blue valley;  
The valley stoops to the silver Tyne;  
And here, on the edge of earth and sky,  
Where the blackcock feeds and the curlews cry,  
Is the long Wall's lonely line.

Do the legions come in the night, I wonder,  
Trying to gather with ghostly hands  
The stones that Time with his towering breakers  
Has flung afar on these moorland acres  
Like sea-wrack flung on the Solway sands?

Do the moonbeams glint on the sheen of the eagles?  
Do the burnished helms in the starlight glow?  
Is there no sound heard of the horses' feet  
And the waggon-tyres on the wheel-worn street  
When the ghostly trumpets blow?

## THE ROMAN WALL.

Do they stand by the Wall, the cohort captains,  
And hearken, leaning on idle spears,  
To the step of the grim, resistless Foeman  
Who broke the triumph of Rome and Roman  
Under the heel of his trampling years?

Conquering Time!—yet he, too, took pity  
On glory thrust from its golden throne,  
And a flower on the old Wall planted deep—  
A wreath on the grave where the warriors sleep  
And the mindful war-gods watch their own.

See; I take for remembrance, red with ruin,  
From the Wall where the clashing vanguards met,  
This bloom that the crumbling stones have cherished,  
This after-flower of an Empire perished,  
To bind in my garland of rare regret!

## The Shadow Dancers

When the swallow's dipping low and the cloud's above the wheat  
You can see the Shadow Dancers as they pass on flying feet;  
The swallow is no mate for them, so swift their sandals glance,  
The South Wind or the West Wind is their partner in the dance.

They tread the fields as silently as bats on dewy wings,  
They clash no merry cymbals and they clink no ankle-rings;  
The wild rose sees the coming of the twilight that they cast  
And lifts her blushing face to them—and Lo! the dance is past!

Not a watcher in the barley, not a listener in the wheat,  
Sees a shape or hears a whisper of those twinkling shadow feet;  
If they leave a fairy message will the corn remember it,  
Or the poppies, or the charlock, when the evening stars are lit?

## Flowers of the Frost

The sun is a king on the crest of the hill  
And the woods are aflame with his glory,  
The voice of the north wind is suddenly still  
And the trees have forgotten her story;  
From bank to white bank where the branches are met  
And the moss like some dame's powdered hair is,  
With flashing white jewels the thorn-twigs are set,  
And the glen's in the hands of the fairies.

At the base of each bole, in the curves of the steep  
That the north wind herself never reaches,  
The red leaves lie low, in a pitiful heap,  
That last June were the pride of the beeches;  
There are diamonds hung on the wren's balustrade  
And the trunk where the squirrel's steep stair is;  
There is silence as though earth herself were afraid  
Now the glen's in the hands of the fairies!

Fay and fay they shall gather when daylight is dead  
And the white moon comes questioning over,  
The shadows themselves not so lightly shall tread  
As the foot of each gay little rover;  
And each one shall pluck from his favourite bough  
A white bloom, as desire in him varies,  
For summer gave never such blossoms as now  
Are the gift of our glen to the fairies.

## Contentment

The gold leaf said to the brown:  
"Let us take hands and go down  
On the wind's wings, for summer is spent  
And the sap runs slow;  
We have served our time; let us be content,  
Let us take hands and go!"

The west wind, passing them, heard  
And paused. Each leaf, like a nestling bird,  
Launched timidly, and was gently caught  
And low to the earth's breast borne.  
On the grass they lay—a brown leaf and a gold,  
All the pride and glory of them come to nought  
And made one with the mould.

Each mourned; but they knew no grief,  
Neither the brown nor the yellow leaf;  
Even when the broom swept them to the fire,  
"See," they said, "to what honour we are brought!  
Are not these the grey cloaks that we sought  
And the red shoes of our desire?"

## Riches

I may neither sport nor feast;  
Wealth is not for me to make;  
But the sun is mine, at least,  
    And my blue hills none can take.  
If I own no gardens fair  
    I can watch the wild rose twine,  
Wood and wold are mine to share  
    And the hills, the hills are mine.

Though my purse can never buy  
    Place to hear the diva's song,  
There's a lark against the sky,  
    And to me the birds belong.  
Though I own no acres broad,  
    Though I hold no farms in fee,  
Yonder glorious hills of God  
    Hold their purple arms to me.

If my cellar lacks of wine,  
Blowing splendid from the sea  
Are not all the hill-winds mine  
Brimming golden cups for me?  
If my shelves of books are bare,  
Have I not the skies to read,  
And the wild flowers that declare  
What is aye the cleaner creed?

Let the wealthy hoard their gold,  
Let the famous guard their wreath;  
All I ask to keep and hold  
Is my path across the heath;  
None my freeway to withstand,  
None my faith and me to part,  
Just the winds to hold my hand  
And the hills to keep my heart!

## The Brown Men

Lean men, brown men, men from overseas,  
Men from all the outer world; shy and ill at ease;  
'Wilderer in the whirl of it where fashion's feet go down;  
Big men, brown men, lost in London Town.

Men whose mighty flocks and herds thread the tussock grass;  
Men who know the furthest forts that hold the Khyber Pass;  
Men who sound the moose-call, whose camp-smoke, thin and blue,  
Scares upon the springtime trail the travelling caribou.

Lean men from the overland with muscles saddle-bound,  
Sighing for their stirrups and a league of open ground;  
Hunters in the jungle, trackers through the thorn,  
Lovers of the hoof-slide and the rope around the horn.

Men who made the mastery that might of Empire brings:  
Men who built the barrages that bind the river-kings;  
Men who built the outmost bridge and laid the furthest line,  
Pilots of the loneliest ships that fly the English sign.

Lean men, brown men, men from overseas;  
Men from all the outer world; shy and ill at ease;  
'Wilderer in the whirl of it where fashion's feet go down;  
Do we know the worth of you—lost in London Town?

## A Maker of Empire

A patient, honest, kindly friend  
The packhorse plodded down the years,  
Content his humble life to spend  
In toil to aid the pioneers.  
Before the swagman and his load,  
Before the waggon and the train,  
He trampled out the rusty road  
And trod the dry road in again.

He bore the first prospector's pan,  
The first surveyor's tent and gear;  
With Sturt and Mitchell led the van  
O'er plains of Doubt, through scrubs of Fear.  
When foemen swarmed about the track  
The danger-circled path he kept,  
And bore the blankets on his back  
Of watchful men who seldom slept.

In the grey dust of moving herds  
He tugged at dawn the golden grass,  
While through the mist like phantom birds  
He saw the great white bullocks pass.  
In the cool creek at noon he splashed,  
Or drank at eve from brackish wells;  
All day his swinging camp-ware clashed,  
All night his bell among the bells.

Before the engine's throb and thrust,  
Before the humming of the wires,  
This overlander, swathed in dust,  
Across the last dim range retires.  
Yet those who know shall not forget  
That North and Westward, rod by rod,  
He saw the conquering camp-fires set  
And broke the track an Empire trod.

## A Summer Evening

Dusk o' the night comes down like wings;  
Silent are birds that the day found blithe,  
The soft low breeze of evening brings  
The far-off chime of hone on scythe.

The nestling swallows beneath the eaves  
Chuckle and bubble, "Good-night, good-night;"  
The midges dance on the dark elm-leaves,  
And the blade o' the moon gleams bright.

Here is a beetle goes late to bed,  
Yonder a moth that the star has called,  
A wandering rook by the mirk misled,  
And a gull by the gloaming thralled.

Dusk o' the night comes down like wings;  
There is no sound heard but the beetle's drone  
And the hum of a million tiny things  
That are dear to the dusk alone.

# The Happy People



## The Happy People

Do you know the Happy People? The really happy folk,  
Who bear no woman's burden, who bend to no man's yoke?  
The happy, laughing people who chase on golden ways  
From starlight unto starlight the splendour of the days?

Their world is bright with butterflies, their path with daisies  
strewn;  
They've a fairy on the rainbow and a witch astride the moon.  
They have jewels in the sunbeams, they have diamonds in the  
dew;  
They have love-songs in the south wind that were never heard  
by you!

No stream but bears their fancy in a boat of silver foam,  
No fire but holds them in its heart towers as of ancient Rome.  
Their green and gorgeous tents are spread in every tree that  
grows,  
They dream with every daisy and rejoice with every rose.

If you'd know the Happy People, you must take wee dimpled  
hands  
And go down among the daisies or across the shining sands,  
For nowhere is there room for faith and nowhere time for  
truth  
Save in that darling kingdom where the harpers harp to Youth.

## A Lullaby

Lady Moon, O Lady Moon,  
Here's a little sleepy girlie that must go to slumber soon!  
Won't you glide across the window on your shining silver wings,  
    Won't you spare 'twixt noon and noon  
    Just one tiny tender minute to this cot with baby in it,  
Though I know you're O so busy with a hundred million things!

Lady Moon, O Lady Moon,  
Let her see the polished buckles on your gleaming silver shoon!  
    Let her touch your diamond rings and the star-dust on  
        your wings;  
And should you bend above her—ah! but that would be a boon!—  
    And kiss her little rosy lips, how kind, O Lady Moon!

Lady Moon, O Lady Moon,  
Tell her just one fairy-story that you've gathered as you go  
    From the pinewoods or the snow,  
From the gaily lighted cities or the stars above them strewn!  
    There's a sleepy little girlie that would like *so* much to know  
    Just one little fairy-story, Lady Moon!

Lady Moon, O Lady Moon,  
It is late; and you're so busy with so many trysts to keep,  
And our little wide-eyed babba—it is time she went to sleep!  
Kiss those cheeks that mock December  
With their roses picked in June;  
Though she's sleepy she'll remember,  
She'll remember, Lady Moon!

## The Admiral

Low in his cushions, with wide blue eyes,  
Our future English Admiral lies.

With loving thought has his life been planned;  
He shall take his share of the sea's command.

He shall wear gold lace on his sleeve and breast  
If God shall will it.—But God knows best.

In our hope and love we like to dream  
Of his flag above and his fleet a-beam.

We like to think of that face aglow  
With the kiss of the wind that the sailors know.

We like to fancy those baby hands  
A strong man's clenched as he shouts commands.

And to dream of those wide blue eyes a-shine  
As his ships come up in a long grey line.

## THE ADMIRAL

And to picture the pride that will flush his cheek  
When the terrible guns of his squadron speak.

And we love to think he will mould and make  
Seamen and gunners for England's sake.

Which shall it be, when his hour draws nigh,  
That his guns must break and his flags out-fly.

Germany, Italy, France or Spain?  
Russia? Japan? Or the Dutch again?

Dear little Admiral, low he lies  
Searching the years with his wide blue eyes.

Is he keeping a wonderful watch and ward  
Over the hilt of that far-off sword?

Ah! The tides go East and the tides go West,  
And life is an ocean. And God knows best!

## The Bringer of Days

There are far places where she plays,  
And unguessed paths down which she strays;  
And once, round-eyed, she said to me:  
"The postman brings the days!"

Monday he brings for me an' you,  
An' Saturday, an' Thursday too,  
He brings them in his bag, you see,  
An' every one is new!"

Of course! 'Twas I that had not thought  
How very much the postman brought  
Besides just news, and joys, and tears,  
And bills he never ought!

Ah! Postie, with that kindly smile  
You've hidden long a heart of guile!  
The blame of the swift-footed years  
Was yours, then, all the while?

## Three

Up at seven and down the stair  
To find that the sun is already there,  
That the grass is green and the sky is blue  
And the fir tree fringed with morning dew,  
And all the world a kingdom free  
With gates flung wide to a child of Three!

Down to the lane where a light wind blows  
And the foxglove nods and the cranesbill grows,  
Berries of red in the roses' place,  
Feathery grasses that fan your face,  
Bluebells brushing a naked knee—  
O, but the world is bright at Three!

An hour and an hour and the sun goes down;  
The rabbit is feeding, a bundle of brown;  
The swallows are crossing the window blind;  
There's a star in front and a star behind,  
And creeping shadows by every tree—  
And O, but the days are short at Three!

## Baby's Trumpet

When Baby blows her trumpet  
The elves of mischief ride,  
Her eyes are lit with laughter,  
Her cheeks are puffed with pride.  
What gift of cradle-fairies  
Has taught our queen to know  
God's angel guards are waiting  
To hear her trumpet blow?

When Baby blows her trumpet  
The tramp of feet one hears,  
One sees her loyal legions  
With sunlit lifted spears;  
Their golden breastplates quiver,  
Their golden helmets shine,  
When Baby blows her trumpet  
And wheels her troops in line.

## BABY'S TRUMPET

When Baby blows her trumpet  
The world grows young again,  
The silent aisles of Fancy  
Grow loud with marching men.  
Before her deathless army  
The earth is all her own,  
No rival ranks are marshalled,  
No answering bugles blown.

When Baby blows her trumpet  
The woods of Wonder wake,  
The hills of Hope are peopled  
With swords for Some One's sake.  
From every windy tree-top,  
From every peak above,  
In splendour fly unfolded  
The crimson flags of Love.

When Baby blows her trumpet  
The kingdoms cease from sound;  
To rule so rich an army  
No empress yet was crowned.  
Earth's towers shall yield their treasure,  
Earth's gates fall back unbarred,  
When Baby with her trumpet  
Calls up her golden guard.

## The Grey Nurse

At the feet of this oldest of nurses,  
Whom the wind has made grey with his strife.  
Happy youth in its wonder rehearses  
The play and the labour of life;  
And there for our children the ocean,  
Robed round with the charm of her spells,  
Turns over with tireless devotion  
Her treasure of seaweed and shells.

She fills their rock-gardens with blossom,  
She smoothes the clean sand for their feet,  
And tells them, clasped close to her bosom,  
Old tales that are tender and sweet;  
Old stories, old sagas and verses,  
Old ballads of beautiful tears,  
Whose words are the tender grey nurse's,  
Whose tune is the sob of the years.

## THE GREY NURSE

We forgive her her squadrons of thunder,  
    Her gauntleted hand on the gate,  
Her long years of rapine and plunder,  
    Her ages of anger and hate,  
As we watch her chase, romping and eager,  
    The bare feet all browned by the sun,  
Over castles her love will beleaguer  
    And trenches her joy will o'er-run.

We have watched her, a war-queen, in splendour,  
    Come riding in harness of spray;  
We have seen her soft-mantled and tender  
    Lean low to our babes in the bay;  
And, forgetting her sword-play and slaughter,  
    When the little white wavelets are curled,  
We know the wild Witch of the Water  
    Is the gentlest grey nurse in the world.

## The Burning of Summer

I heard a laugh in the leafless trees;  
I saw on the path of the open sky,  
Borne by the light October breeze,  
A blue smoke drifting by.

A tiny maid in her waltz of cheer  
Paused as she heard my rustling tread:  
"Come and help at our dancing, dear;  
We are burning Summer!" she said.

The heap grew higher. The white smoke rose,  
The glow of the fire a memory brought.  
It is only the heart of a child that knows  
How to laugh when a summer is burned, I  
thought.

## A Song of the Rain

The rain swept over the hill,  
The rain fell steep in the street.  
Said the yeoman, "I cannot till!"  
Said the lovers, "We cannot meet!"

Still the Rain King rode in power,  
Setting his storm-clouds free,  
Nursing the fruit and the flower,  
Tending the lawn and the lea!

"But I cannot play," sobbed the child  
"My daisies are all so wet!"  
And the Rain King, hearing, smiled,  
But his heart grew full with regret.

He has stalled his steed in the West;  
He has gathered his clouds away.  
"Lovers may sorrow and toilers rest,  
But the children," he said, "must play!"

## The Bundle in the Shawl

In all the sorrow of the street  
That surges round us like a sea,  
In all the pity of bare feet,  
In all the pain of poverty,  
There seems to me no sadder sight  
Or one that more the heart appals  
Than mothers shielding from the night  
The bundles in their tattered shawls.

Here some poor wretch to honour lost  
Hastes with her babe Hell's draught to buy,  
Its little patient cold arms crossed  
Where only happy arms should lie;  
And here some other, spent and weak,  
Has stumbled forth at duty's call,  
Close holding to her breast and cheek  
The bundle in the tattered shawl.

Fair innocence of hope bereft,  
Pale youth where youth is but a name,  
Sons bound to slavery or theft,  
Dear daughters doomed to toil or shame;  
Poor hapless babes, the wind blows cold  
Through that poor mantle thin and torn,  
But were it trebled, fold on fold,  
It would not cover you from scorn!

Man's pity hath not entered in  
To help the broken and the weak;  
The breasts ye suck are seared with sin,  
Or sorrow blinds the eyes ye seek!  
There are those others clothed in silk,  
But suffering's bitterness of gall  
Is fed you in your mothers' milk,  
Poor bundles in the tattered shawl!

The old must suffer as they may  
What fate or fault hath bid them bear,  
But thorn and steepness of the way  
Must these, the little children, share?  
For pity of the mother-love  
That through the ages throbs and calls  
May angels fold their wings above  
The bundles in the tattered shawls!

## To My Baby Girl

O little heart  
That beats so close to mine,  
I pray for you  
That every heart be true  
Which through the years shall worship at your shrine;  
May none betray,  
None kneeling with his roses give you rue;  
This only, little heart, I pray,  
I pray for you.

## In the Woods

The North winds blow with a promise of snow  
And grey is the Autumn sky,  
But merry and warm through the woods we go,  
Neddy and Babs and I.

Babs is wrapped in her scarlet shawl  
And snug in her basket chair,  
And Daddies of course don't matter at all,  
And Neddy's all right in his hair.

Neddy that walks with the stately stride  
Of a race that has carried kings,  
Taking the Babs for a "booful ride"  
That she wouldn't exchange for wings!

We follow the path through the copses brown  
Where the shadows hide like thieves,  
And the sound we hear like a silken gown  
Is Neddy's hoofs in the leaves.

The bracken is bronze and white and gold,  
The mosses are wet and green.  
The drops that the bending fern-fronds hold  
Are the pearliest ever seen.

Fluttering down comes a red, red leaf;  
Perhaps from the big beech-tree  
A fairy is dropping her handkerchief  
To Neddy and Babs and me!

And now we stop while the dead leaves stir  
And a step so light goes by  
That it might be a pheasant under the fir  
Or a raindrop out of the sky!

And now we stand while a red-brown head  
Plays hide-and-seek with three—  
A squirrel trying to trick old Ned  
And baffle my Babs and me!

But the sun is gone, and the shadows creep,  
And the gold lights flicker and flee;  
And Daddies must work and Neddies sleep  
And Babses take their tea.

So we wave one arm to the darkening firs,  
And one to the sunset sky,  
And home we go—my hand in hers—  
Neddy, and Babs, and I.

## The Witches' Steeds

There are four steeds that the witches ride  
Down the starry meadows shining and wide:  
You can hear them snort as they gallop through,  
Tugging their bridles of roped pearl-dew,  
But never a one can be seen by you!

One is the North Wind; grey the sky  
When he bites at the beeches, cantering by.  
Hark to his madcap rider rate  
As she plucks at his forelock: "Straight! Go straight!"

One is the East Wind; four elf-grooms  
Fed him all day with the first Spring blooms;  
But the country lasses, a-tired o' their Maying,  
Hear him, still starved, in the night-time neighing.

The West Wind, mad with his witch's spur,  
Plunges and leaps, but he can't throw her!  
And the children turn in their sleep and wonder  
When they hear his hoofs on the house-top thunder.

## THE WITCHES' STEEDS

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The South Wind last; behind him the leaves  
And the swallows come home to our English eaves.  
Oh! he lifts each hoof so light and so light  
That there's never a flower in the still warm night  
That is crushed by the whinnying South Wind's flight.

## The Barring of the Gates

*"Then there aren't any fairies at all, Mummy?"*

The Fairy King lies dead—Ring, ring the bluebells over him!  
Gather the beech leaves red for a winding sheet to cover him!  
There will be no more dancing down in the woodland hall—  
And there never were fairies at all, dear heart,  
There never were fairies at all!

What hand hath drawn the bars on the golden gates so soon?  
Who told you of stars just stars, and a moon-face only a moon?  
There will be no more riches hid where the rainbows fall—  
And there never were fairies at all, dear heart,  
There never were fairies at all!

You will not sleep to-night, dear, waking and wondering why  
Out on their broomsticks bright, dear, no witches ride in the sky!  
Why do your child-lips tremble, why do your big tears fall?—  
For there never were fairies at all, dear heart,  
There never were fairies at all!

Even when we have grown old, dear, they bar us our gates of bliss,  
Hiding the hands we would hold, dear, taking the lips we would  
kiss,  
Till we doubt in the dreary midnights that thrill to a dead year's  
call—  
If there ever were fairies at all, dear heart,  
If there ever were fairies at all!

## The Storks

There's a quaint old Nor'land fancy and a legend that I love,  
    Of the white storks winging Southward through the mist;  
Of a palace or a cottage that they fold their wings above  
    Laying baby in his cradle to be kissed;  
Of their building on the house-tops and the nests by no one  
    stirred  
    For the love-gift of the little lives they bring;  
Of the children's wide-eyed wonder at the great white drifting  
    bird  
    That has borne them in the shadow of his wing.

Was it flying thus, I wonder, through God's blue and sunlit aisles.  
    With the silent snows of Norway spread below,  
That the babies caught the witching, merry sunlight of their  
    smiles,  
    And the pureness of their hearts as white as snow!  
Call it fairy-tale or fancy, 'tis a legend strangely sweet,  
    And a clinging hand, a little upturned mouth,  
Always sets me dreaming, dreaming that I hear the wings a-beat  
    Of the white storks flying softly to the South.

War



## A Dream of England

I dreamed a dream  
Of some great Empire arming for a fray;  
Of fond farewells and parting words to say,  
And strong men torn 'twixt love and battle-pride,  
Taking, soft-eyed, their women's last bequest  
With clinging mouth to mouth and breast to breast—  
Then to the gangway proudly; and I guessed  
That this was England!

Then in my dream  
I saw an army of the bravest brave  
Flung back and forward in the battle's chance,  
Its flag upon the leaguered city wave,  
Its dusty worn battalions still advance.  
I saw the bodies of its leaders strew  
The mountain passes as it blundered through  
Without a thought of wavering; and I knew  
That this was England!

And dreaming still,  
I saw a lurking ambush in the thorn,  
A sleeping camp, an outpost strangled, then  
A little force surprised and overborne,  
A little force of brave out-numbered men  
That had no time to fight, no wish to flee:  
Ranged by their jammed gun, standing knee to knee  
With folded arms; until it seemed to me,  
    This must be England!

Last, in my dream  
I heard far-off among green Island lanes  
In farm and cot and manor the one cry  
“Fight on! Fight on! More troopships and more trains!”  
And in my dream the soldiers crowded by!  
I saw waved hands and heard the cheers that sped,  
Drowning the wailing for the Island dead,  
And turning in my sleep I woke and said:—  
    “This is our England!”

## War

War! The winds are sighing it,  
The hill birds are crying it  
    To the valley's uttermost bounds.  
River and burn repeat  
The noise of the hurrying feet  
    Of the unleashed hounds!

War! The bridles are jingling,  
Noble and yeoman mingling,  
    At the summoning bugle's call.  
Proudly the English muster;  
The pennons of Ireland cluster;  
    Scots, be up with them all!

Rise, as ye rose aforetime,  
Bonneted, busked for war-time,  
    Grim as ye grouped of yore!  
By the bloody fields ye have trodden—  
Waterloo—Badajoz—Flodden—  
    Who be your masters in war?

By the squares ye have held unshaken;  
By the forts ye have stormed and taken;  
By your charging, resolute Greys;  
By Dargai Height; by Delhi Gate;  
Now stand ye to the swords of Fate  
As ye stood in the olden days!

Heroes laurelled of all renown  
Look from their high Valhalla down,  
Trusting the swords they bred;  
Sons of such that have gone before—  
Kings in valour and Lords of War—  
Go where their stars have led!

Play up, pipers of Scotland, blare to the world that waits!  
Tell them our youth and manhood stand massed by the Northern  
Gates!  
Tell them our three joined kingdoms are fain for the battle to be;  
Tell them the heart of Scotland is the readiest heart of the three!

## A Song of the Old Men

Youth! To you is the splendid prize:  
To have left your school but a term or two,  
And to sudden see with your shining eyes  
The path of honour made plain for you;  
To be picked at once for the Game of Games,  
To be called to a quest that the soul bestirs;  
To fling your torch on the altar flames,  
And ride with the Great Adventurers!

Pity us, Youth!—If our feet be slow,  
If our eyes that watch you be old and dim,  
Our hopes go forth on the road you go,  
Our hearts are chanting your battle hymn;  
And whether your fate be a grave in France,  
Or a laurel wreath and the Golden Spurs,  
What would we give for your chance, your chance  
To ride with the Great Adventurers!

## The Stragglers

Under the blue of wide heavens in the haze of the Western heat,  
The sweating horses go blindly down the golden lanes of wheat,  
Till, over the drone of the reaper, and over the clink of the  
chains,

And the cry of a startled prairie bird that flits to the further  
plains,

Comes a whispered sound on the sea-wind sighing;

And the jingling harness is hushed, and hushed is the reaper's  
hum;

The bugle call comes nearer, and nearer the throb of the  
drum!

Hark to the West, the lonely West, the loyal West replying:—

“Mother, we hear your crying,

    Mother, we come!”

Dark in the driving dust-wrack the wild mob wheels and rings;  
Yonder the spurred flank reddens, yonder the foam-fleck flings;  
Till, over the snort of the camp horse, and over the tramp of the  
    hoofs,

And over the din of the dust storm that rattles the iron roofs,

Comes a whispered sound on the sea-wind sighing;  
And the tramp of the cattle is hushed, and the weird cicadas'  
hum,  
The bugle call comes nearer, and nearer the throb of the drum!  
Hark to the Bush, the drought-bound Bush, the brave old Bush  
replying:—  
"Mother, we hear your crying,  
Mother, we come!"

## The Channel Guard

Where runs the Channel East and West  
A stout troop holds the way,  
With helms that bear a snow-white crest  
And riding-cloaks of grey;  
Beneath the winds that rule their reins  
The proud-maned horses prance,  
Rough-ridden down the misty lanes  
'Twixt Dover Cliffs and France.

We hear at night the troopers grey  
When, touching English ground,  
They tap upon our doors to say—  
"All's well; so sleep ye sound!  
All's well; our bridle chains are bright,  
Our swords unsheathed and keen,  
And, late or early come the fight,  
Our squadrons stand between!"

They will not fail, this faithful band;  
Their hearts with ours are twined;  
Their strength is Britain's to command;  
To her their swords are signed.  
They broke of old the Spaniard's boast  
And stayed his fleet's advance,  
These riders by the Dover Coast  
Who hold the roads to France.

Sure sentinels that never sleep  
They guard us night and day—  
Our restless troopers of the deep,  
Our grim patrols in grey.  
So long as yonder Channel waves  
Before our gates remain,  
The Despot and his driven slaves  
May watch the Straits in vain.

## A Begging Song for Belgium

Here's a beggar, here's a gipsy, here's a tramp  
With the dust of Flanders travel on his feet;  
Here's a soldier from a still unconquered camp,  
Coming limping through the hazes and the heat,  
With a story of a hope was never lost,  
Of a courage that was never trampled down,  
Of a corner that the foe has never crossed,  
Of a king with nought but honour for a crown!

Here's a story, here's a legend, here's a tale  
That will sink into the heart of you and sear:  
Of the homeless on their seaward-pointed trail,  
Of the exiles too much broken for a tear;  
Of the old men bent and wearied by the way,  
Of the women looking back upon their dead,  
Of the young men vowing vengeance on the day,  
Of the children crying bitterly for bread!

Here's the season, here's the moment, here's the chance  
To show that hearts in England still can beat  
For such men as manned the guns that saved us France,  
For such men as will not recognise defeat,  
For the country that the foeman has betrayed,  
For the women he dishonoured to his shame!—  
Shall your gold not be by seventy times repaid  
If you give it now for Belgium in God's name?

## The Unawakened Hills

Here, in the unawakened hills,  
From shepherds' cots that lonely lie  
In quiet glens by peat-fed rills  
The blue smoke trails upon the sky,  
Unblown by any wind of war,  
By any breeze of hate unstirred,  
While half the world is fighting for  
A treaty torn, a broken word!

The shepherds walk their hirsels wide  
And reck not of the wrath of kings,  
And watch the hawks above them glide  
And see no wraith of darker wings.  
The women watch the moon-mist rise  
And gather greylily in the fern,  
Yet dream not of the distant skies  
On which the flames of battle burn!

A fox across the glidders steals,  
A grouse cock sounds his raucous call,  
A whaup above the moorland wheels,  
A grey-hen watches from the wall;  
The bracken flames in chrome and red,  
In golden plumes the grasses dance—  
O, hills unwakened!—and the Dead  
Lie sleeping in the fields of France!

## The Ladies from Hell

*(The German nickname for the Highlanders)*

The battle sways backward and forward  
In wedges and hollows and curves,  
A hard-pressed battalion is yielding,  
A leader has called for reserves.  
Hark! Drone of the pipes in the distance  
That grows to a soul-stirring swell!  
Brown-skirted, with bonnets a-bobbing,  
Come up the gay Ladies from Hell!

O brightly the sunlight is gleaming  
On the blades that the rifles reveal.  
The Ladies are wearing their jewels;  
Hurrah! for the glint of the steel!  
O fiercely they swing to the music,  
Their faces alight with its spell;  
Brave-hearted, bare-kneed and triumphant,  
The lean-featured Ladies from Hell!

Our foes have made war upon women  
By dastardly choice of their own.  
The daughters of Belgium are weeping.  
The mothers of Flanders make moan.  
Ho! Slayers of maids and of mothers,  
Do your bayonets serve you as well  
When you're called up to stand in the open  
And face the grim Ladies from Hell?

## O Weeping Glens

O weeping glens; O mountain peaks that mourn  
For youth and valour destined to the day,  
Who shall give back your sons thus roughly torn  
From your hurt breasts; those men that marched away?

O cornfields green from the sowing; O meadows lush  
From the first laugh of Spring; O woods where the doves  
Low in the dim-lit fir-boughs and the hush,  
Heedless of man's new madness, nurse their loves!

Who shall give back your gallant ones, your best;  
Sure hand to the plough, strong arm to the scythe;  
Him who swung the axe longest without rest;  
Him whose song in the morning sounded most blithe?

Scotland! dear Mother of the Brave! In vain  
Thou callest through the dawning and the mirk  
To those beloved that will not come again—  
Those noble sons dead by their nobler work!

## The Scots Greys

O “terrible grey horses” that woke Napoleon’s fears,  
The thunder of your beating hoofs makes music down the years!  
At Blenheim and at Ramillies your fires of glory grew  
To blaze upon a watching world, full-flamed, at Waterloo!  
And still our fathers tells their sons in many a Nor’land town  
Of how their grandsires in the Greys rode the French standards  
down!

O “terrible grey horses,” the Russians heard your tread  
When Scarlett’s men, at one to ten, rode up the lanes of lead!  
The burghers saw your bridle-chains shine silver in the sun  
When French spurred into Kimberley to say the siege was done!  
And now by Mons and Charleroi, by Meaux and Compiegne,  
The spirit fed at Fontenoy has fired your troops again!

The men that once opposed your march with rifle, trench, and  
sword,  
Are fighting on your flank to-day to stem the vandal horde.  
The spirit of your country calls, ye need no whip nor spur  
To gallop ’neath the gauntlet-hands that hold the world for her.  
Charge on, and break them, gallant Greys! your grim name  
keep and hold  
O “terrible grey horses” that Napoleon feared of old!

## The Colours

In this dim Cathedral place  
Hang the banners of our land:  
Riven banners of the race  
Made to conquer and command!  
Where those age-old colours twine,  
Faded, torn, and stained with red,  
Scotland in her inmost shrine  
Keeps the memory of her Dead.

Scotland's banners! Who shall gaze  
On their faded folds unstirred?  
Who in these Imperial days  
Hear unthrilled their martial word?  
Down the High Street cheer on cheer!  
Hark! the trampling troops go by!—  
Banners in the dimness here  
Taught such soldiers how to die.

Scotsman! In the silence kneel!  
To these emblems lift thine eyes!  
Here in God's own presence feel  
Right's insistent victory lies!  
By those tattered flags and torn,  
By that sacred purple stain,  
Scotland's banners shall be borne,  
Conquering, by her sons again!

## Remounts

In the rosy red of the dawning your hoofs on the roadway ring,  
You that shall carry our heroes, you that shall fight for the King,  
You that shall lead the triumph in a last long trampling line  
When the swords have saved us Europe and slashed their way  
to the Rhine!

Called from an Irish farmyard, called from an English fen,  
Called from a prairie pasture to measure the lives of men,  
What courage that laughs at danger, what spirit that scoffs at  
Death  
But, born to our Empire freedom, ye have drunk with your  
every breath!

Bred in our conquering kingdoms, you too are the Empire's sons,  
You that shall tug at the waggons, you that shall gallop the guns,  
You that are part of our glory, whose help has the years bestowed  
Whenever our grandsires gathered, wherever our fathers rode!

And, faith, ye shall never fail us when the whimpering bullets  
fly,  
When the lances shiver and splinter and Death in his spurs goes  
by;  
When the stricken reels in his saddle and the chill hand drops  
the rein,  
And bloody out of the battle ye wheel to the tents again!

Hail to the hero that waits you; gunner, hussar, or dragoon!  
Hail to the day of your glory—and the War-God send it soon!  
Luck to your prancing squadron whose hoofs on the roadway  
ring!  
Proud ye shall carry the victors who carry the swords of the  
King!

## The Heroes

There came a west wind swinging  
Through their silver myall trees,  
To the quiet bushland bringing  
Clash of world-wide destinies.  
From their Southron sun-dreams waking  
Swift they rose and buckled sword,  
Their Imperial burden taking  
At the first flung word!

To their high ideals turning,  
Unto great adventure cast,  
In the veins of each leapt burning  
Britain's proud and splendid Past!  
In their gold hearts hid the glory  
That is Britain's crowning grace  
Long as Fame repeats the story  
Of the Island Race!

At the word they rose and gathered  
Down the dusty western roads,  
Where the struggling teams, foam-lathered,  
Strain before the ten-ton loads.  
Where the darkling pine scrubs feather ;  
Where by creeks the bell birds call ;  
Rode they, knee and knee together,  
Lithe and lean and tall !

Farm and camp and cattle station  
Gave their dearest sons that day—  
“If you need them, Mother-Nation,  
Take them !” mother hearts could say.  
Ports where quay sides clattered loudly,  
Cities crowned with tower and hall,  
Gave their best, and gave them proudly  
At the Empire’s call !

By the storied Nile we found them,  
Free of wizard Egypt’s gift,  
Tombs of ages piled around them,  
Sands of Time their ceaseless drift ;  
Found them ever southward turning  
To one star above the sea,  
Since it woke their nightly yearning  
For the grass countree.

## THE HEROES

Once again the transports bore them  
Eager to an unknown coast.  
Honour's flag flew white before them,  
Pride flung pennons o'er their host.  
Broke the dawn of their endeavour  
Down the Turkish hilltops grey.—  
For the land that bred them, never  
Broke a prouder day!

Time shall tell that splendid story  
Of the beaches swept by Death,  
Of Australia's crowning glory  
Wafted on the war-guns' breath!  
Far Australian lands shall name them  
With a new Imperial pride,  
Glad in after years to claim them  
As their sons who died!

## Sails of Victory

Where the lone look-outs their night-watch keep,  
Where the quivering searchlights gleam,  
Comes up like a bird on the guarded deep  
A ship of the Seas of Dream.

A ship with a fighting crew complete—  
Three decked, full sailed and sparred—  
A ship that is not of the North Sea Fleet  
Nor yet of the Channel guard.

O grey patrols of the grey North Sea,  
Ye may wheel and let her through,  
For the flag at her foremast flying free  
Is the old Red, White, and Blue!

Admirals all, your pennons dip  
As proudly astern ye stand!—  
This is the *Victory*, Nelson's ship,  
Come back to her old command!

## A Song of the Flag

There's a flag the free winds follow—'tis the banner England  
bought her

With the mastery of the main;

Every ship upon its azure has a lion to support her,  
It is barred with every sunbeam 'twixt the wind-cloud and the  
water,

It is starred with faith and freedom, and it bears on every  
quarter

Broken galley-bench and chain.

There's a flag the blue waves dip to—on the turret-ship and  
trader,

On the liner out and home;

Every crown upon that banner has a conquering name to braid  
her,

Every rose in every corner has a limbered gun to shade her,  
And the Admirals of England chase the Spaniard's doomed  
Armada

Round its borders in white foam.

It has hailed a thousand summers since we haltered the white stallions

In their blue fields running free;

Since we forced them to our bidding, ramping royal-maned battalions,

Bearing down our swift three-deckers on the treasure-laden galleons,

Or, scarce mouthing at their bridles, arching crests in courtly dalliance

With our keels upon the sea.

Through the gates our hands flung open sail the fleets of all the Powers

Dipping flags as they go past,

All the flags of all the nations like a bunch of coloured flowers,

'Mid the flags of every nation not a prouder flag than ours

As she dips a royal answer from a hundred fortress-towers

Each a stronger than the last.

We have won it with the yew-bow, we have held it with the yeoman,

We have fostered it and fed;

With a lion-crest above it as a boast and battle-omen

We have built this wider Empire than the widest of the Roman,

Built it safe and built it surely on the bodies of our foemen

And the bones of English dead.

Dead we left upon the ranges with the bloodwoods arching over;  
Dead we left in Maori fern;

In the shadow of the kopjes where the vultures wheel and hover;  
In the jungle; in the backwoods with the maple-leaves to cover;  
Dead, amid the ocean dirges, laid beside their deep-sea lover  
Shrouded, leaded, dropped astern.

Dead we buried with their honours, with their medals laid  
beside them,

To the roll of the dulled drum;

Dead that fell above their axes with the rites of Death denied  
them,

Dead we heaped within the trenches with a shallow ridge to  
hide them,

With our banner for a grave-cloth that the English flag may  
guide them,

Through the unknown dark to come.

Gallant, gallant dead of England! To the wandering winds  
that know them

Let us flaunt our flag afar.

On the hills that guard our heroes, on the fenceless seas below  
them;

It is ours to hold the Empire that they left us, ours to show them  
We shall not forget the homage and the honour that we owe  
them

Who have made us what we are!

Though the roses of the banquet red and white are round us  
lying,

And the sparkling wine-cups foam,  
Though the lissom jewelled dancers all their witching arts are  
plying

With a heaving of white bosoms and a soft seductive sighing,  
With our heel upon the dead realms shall we droop among the  
dying

Like a lost Imperial Rome?

We, who never failed a summons from the feasting to the foray  
When the foe stood threatening by,

We, who gave our best so bravely; we, who bought so dear our  
glory,

Shall we trample on our laurels? They are stained with sweat,  
and gory

But, laid safe between the pages of our Book of Empire story  
They shall shine when roses die.

By the English blood that bought it! 'tis a kingdom worth  
the keeping!

'Tis a royal priceless ward!

Though our halls have vacant places, though our mothers' hearts  
go weeping,

When we hear the bugles calling, when the naked blades are  
leaping,  
All the world shall know that England, if she slept was only  
sleeping  
With a hand upon her sword!

God of Battles! If we served Thee as a smiter to Thy smitten,  
If we fought as true men fight,  
Hear our prayer, O God of Battles! Let the light we bear be  
lit in  
Every kingdom of the wide world, and across our flag be  
written:—  
*FREEDOM! BY THE GRACE OF HEAVEN AND THE  
GAUNTLET-HAND OF BRITAIN!  
AND MAY GOD DEFEND THE RIGHT!*

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